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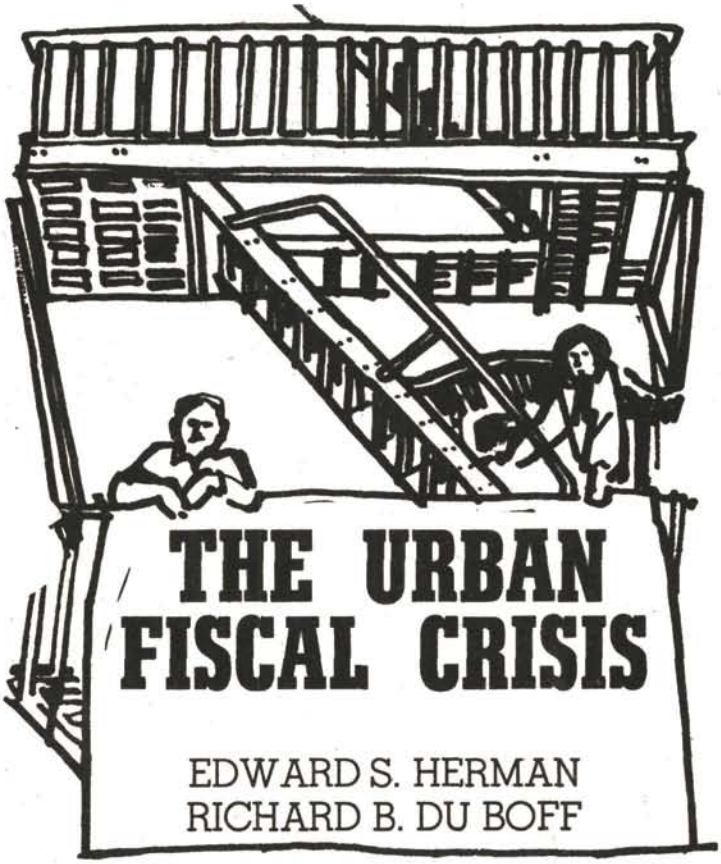

THE URBAN FISCAL CRISIS

EDWARD S. HERMAN
RICHARD B. DU BOFF

PETER HEINEGG ASLEEP IN THE LORD
SISYPHUS 'DARKNESS AT NOON'
THOMAS POWERS THE BIG APPLE
PETER STEINFELS HISTORY ON TV
COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR. HOLLYWOOD CONFIDENTIAL
STEPHEN DARST THE ROMAN-α-THIEF
ELEANOR B. WYMARD THE CHURCH OF J. F. POWERS
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LEONARD SWIDLER
MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE:
JESUS AND MOHAMMED MEET

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NEWS & VIEWS

A New Kung Case?

Father Horst Hermann, teacher of canon law at the University of Münster, in 1974 published *An Immoral Relationship*, a book about church-state relations in West Germany.

He scored the fact that on the basis of agreements dating from the Weimar Republic and the concordat between the Vatican and the Hitler regime, the Church enjoys a privileged position —and, continuing to live still in the spirit of these agreements, it tends to cling to privileges that are immoral. Hermann went further: from this fact the official Church in West Germany would be, in his view, "a system of injustice in which the real Church is no longer a partner to be taken seriously."

A year after the book was published, Cardinal Döpfner, president of the country's bishops' conference, asked Bishop Tenhumberg of Münster to apprise Horst Hermann—who is under his jurisdiction—of the "grave reservations the German bishops have about the book."

Last October conversations took place between Bishop Tenhumberg and Father Hermann, who was summoned to retract the greatest part of his theses and above all to give up all sorts of theological formulations. Professor Hermann was not at all disposed to accede to the request. Not only did he refuse to retract his theses, but he said he was going to present them in a more trenchant fashion still. At the end of the meeting, he displayed the proofs of his new book, *The Mortal Sins of the Catholic Church in West Germany*, about to emanate in a large printing from a major publishing house.

Bishop Tenhumberg felt the affair had reached the point at which sanctions were called for. He decided, since Professor Hermann had "clearly stood apart from the Catholic Church," to withdraw his canonical permission; that is to say, Hermann was to lose his post as ecclesiastical professor to future priests.

It was an exceptional sanction considering the juridical situation in West Germany: professors of theology are employees of the state, not the Church, and are paid by the state, not the Church.

Bishop Tenhumberg based his decision on another juridical reality, the earlier 1929 Concordat between Prussia and the Catholic Church, which gives the Church the right to ask that the state replace by another professor of its choice a professor it finds undesirable.

Bishop Tenhumberg believes he has found a good solution for this ecclesiastical dispute. But Professor Hermann sees this as only one more proof of the correctness of his theses. Recently he appealed the bishop's decision to Rome. Meanwhile, the affair is causing considerable comment among European theologians, in the press and on radio and television.

The B-1, Again

Add to the anti-B-1 literature [New & Views 2/27/76] a study published by the Brookings Institute. Entitled *Modernizing the Strategic Bomber Force—Why and How*, the study concedes the need for some new bomber force as insurance against the failure or destruction of strategic missile bases, but argues that the B-1 is not the instrument.

Its argument leans strongly on economics. The B-1 would cost too much and for the price would supply no great tactical advantage over the development of a new craft around the fuselage of a wide-bodied jet transport, such as the Boeing 747. Such adaptation could save the taxpayer $10- to $15-billion over a ten-year period, according to the Brookings Institute.

The study is available for $2.95 a copy by writing the Institute at 1775 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036.

The Defense Department, meanwhile, is pressing ahead with its B-1 plans, and the other day Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld contended in a statement to Congress that the B-1 is needed "to maintain an effective bomber force beyond the 1980s."

Congress must authorize production of a fleet of B-1s by voting the funds for construction. The time for the critical decision is narrowing down.

The Good & the Bad

It's been a mixed period for the business of religion.

The U.S. Patent Office has patented a new "religious" soap (# 3,936,384), described and illustrated as a soap bar with a crucifixion scene embossed on one face and the words of a prayer on the other. Presumably the soap washes away dirt, not sins.

That's the good news—along, of course, with the news that the Diocese of Trenton has signed a three-year contract with the Ladies Professional Golf Association to sponsor tournaments on the next three LPGA tours. There's been no such religious breakthrough since 1965, when Evangelist Rex Humbard bought the Real Form Girdle Co. of Brooklyn, since divested.

The bad news: Well, the monks at New Melleray Abbey in Iowa are no longer selling bread to the public. Reason given is the decline in Trappist ranks caused by death and those who leave the abbey for another life. Discommoded will be several score families. Henceforth the local supermarket will supply their loaves for their fishes.

Bicentennial Bananas

The Bicentennial goes from bad to badder. A New York *Daily News* correspondent reports the creation of a Bicentennial casket. It markets for $1,776, is colored red, white and blue, and comes equipped with plastic American flags.

Kitsch is everywhere, but as James Michener might say, what else could you expect?

Addressing a joint session of the Colorado Legislature, Michener framed the Bicentennial in the context of inflation, unemployment and the aftermath of Watergate.

"In the middle of all this they ask us to hold a barn dance," Michener said. "It's like a couple trying to celebrate an anniversary after the worst year they ever had."

Odds and Ends

—Financial difficulties have forced Presbyterian-affiliated Queens College of Charlotte, N.C., to drop four courses from the curriculum. The four chosen: Russian, German, philosophy and religion.

—*Harvard Magazine*'s bumper-sticker contest was won hands-down, we'd say, by Richard L. Kaye. Among his entries: LAST BUT NOT LISZT, IT'S GRIEG TO ME, DE FALLA IN YOUR EYES, CZERNY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, TUBA PLAYERS HAVE BASS INSTINCTS, BEWARE THE IVES OF MARCH. Finally, probably to demonstrate that he does not have a one-track mind: SHAKESPEARE WAS AN AVON PRODUCT.

—And speaking about prophets without honor. . . . How about *New Blackfriars*, the monthly edited by English Dominicans, featuring a cover article on St. Thomas Aquinus?

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

Church in Crisis

Colts Neck, N.J.

To the Editors: I don't know if I agree with your editorial [Jan. 2, "The Crisis] about Sunday Mass. There is too much ancient and deep tradition—even before the arm-twisting—about the common community celebration of the Paschal Mysteries on every "little Easter" (Sunday). But as a parish priest of twenty years I have to agree with you about the connection between the crisis of Church life and the confidence of the community in its official leadership. However, I suggest that the alienation goes wider and deeper than the birth control and divorce issues.

The people find themselves alienated from their own self-determination, from a genuinely viable way of having their hurts listened to and understood, from the opportunity of reaching out and confronting their bishops, from even knowing them as actual and caring human beings. Their parish councils are square democratic pegs in round hierarchical holes. Their diocesan pastoral councils wither from inaction. Like Father Greeley they wonder if anyone up at the top is going to recognize the crisis in their hearts, in their parishes.

The people cannot understand why the bishop is so remote. They cannot understand why he doesn't make his diocese smaller so he can get around and talk to them, why there is not one major headquarters to administer several smaller dioceses so the bishop could work with manageable numbers; why he ignores one of the great untapped resources in the Church: the elderly and retired. These are people with experience, savvy, professionalism and tried spirituality—and time. The people cannot fathom why they must suffer with well known difficult pastors, why their children should be subject to early outrageous impressions of the Church because of them, why any public denial of the Trinity will bring

(Continued on page 188)

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MONEY TALKS

The provisions of the 1974 Federal Election Campaign Act were complex; so too is the recent Supreme Court decision on the subject. There is a story, doubtless apocryphal, of a timid curate who was asked by the pastor what he thought of his breakfast egg; parts of it, he is supposed to have said, were very good. That is more or less the way it is with this Supreme Court decision. Good and bad arguments seem inextricably mixed, and various parts of the Court's decision go in different directions.

The purpose of the reform measure was laudable: to reduce the corrupting influence of big money in election campaigns. In the process of shaping the measure, however, the purity of Congressional intentions became badly muddied. A major drawback in the law was that in effect it aided incumbents and established parties over newcomers, whether individuals or groups. This discrimination against non-incumbents and minor political parties in fact curtailed the public's right to choose freely at the polls.

Nonetheless, the reform law, like the curate's egg, had its good parts too. Although the Court said that the members of the Federal Election Commission should be appointed by the President rather than by Congress, it did uphold this and three other key provisions: the principle of public financing, full disclosure of contributions, and limits on direct individual contributions. At the same time the Court struck down as unconstitutional all limits on how much can be spent in a campaign for Congress by a candidate or in his behalf, and it struck down nearly all limits on spending in a campaign for the presidency. However, candidates for the presidential nomination in a major party who are eligible for $20 million in public funds can spend no more than that unless they reject public money. As far as the House and the Senate are concerned, with all restrictions on these campaigns removed, the ruling will have considerable impact this year. As for the limit of $1000 on individual con-

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tributions, the Court seriously weakened this provision of the law by ruling that a contributor can spend unlimited amounts as long as his efforts are not directly coordinated by the candidate—a gaping loophole. For the rich the doors are now wide open. As the law was written, a presidential candidate could not spend more than $50,000 of his own or his immediate family's money; the Court struck this provision down as a violation of the First Amendment, equating the use of money with freedom of speech. This means, of course, that a multi-millionaire like Nelson Rockefeller can, if he chooses, speak far louder than anyone else, being able to spend as many millions of his own money as he wishes in an effort to buy the presidency. Howard Hughes for president, anyone?

Efforts at election reform, then, if not quite back at square No. 1, have been gravely hurt, and this at a time when evidence of corruption in corporate slush funds continues to mount. Admittedly the power of money is not always bad; large contributors helped good guy Eugene McCarthy to upset President Johnson in 1968, for example, and he was one of the prime critics of this election law as it was drawn. Still, money power is obviously subject to gross abuse in the elective process, and it should be curbed. What is needed now is a return to the problem in Congress, aimed at keeping what is good and strengthening what is weak—matched at the same time by a vigorous scrutiny by press and public of the Congressional watchdogs themselves.

At the end of February the Court gave Congress three extra weeks to make over the Federal Election Commission. That is time enough, if Congress acts wisely.

COMING:

JOHN C. CORT writing on
'Why I Became a Socialist'

MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

JESUS AND MOHAMMED MEET

Perhaps the last place one would expect a dialogue between Christianity and Islam to occur is in militantly Muslim Libya. But that is where a week-long (February 1-6) dialogue of a spectacular magnitude took place, co-sponsored by Libya and the Vatican. Over 300 Muslims and Christians from every part of the world came as guests of President Qadafi.

But that was not how the dialogue was originally conceived in Fall, 1975. Upon Libyan initiative a dialogue was planned with the Vatican Secretariat for Non-Christians to consist of twelve participants on each side, with perhaps a few observers. Then suddenly the Libyans invested their money and began to invite hundreds of observers. At least upward of one million dollars was invested in this dialogue by Libya. Everyone's total travel and expenses—except mine—was paid for by Libya.

Why such a financial outlay? 1) Sincere desire for religious accord between Muslims and Christians? Yes, but not only. 2) Desire to build an image of Qadafi in the Muslim world as its leading spokesman with Christianity and the West? Very much so. 3) A wish to counterbalance Jewish influence through the Jewish-Christian dialogue by a parallel Muslim-Christian dialogue? Also a fundamental motivation.

Was the dialogue a success? A modest yes for number one. A thundering yes for number two. A violent yes—and no—for number three.

Point one. There was a total good will expressed on the Christian side. On the Muslim side irenicism was likewise the dominant spirit, but unfortunately some of the speeches were very polemic. Still, the spirit of Muslim good will quickly closed over such gaps.

In actuality it was not much of a dialogue, in the sense of give and take by both partners. Both the structure of the conference and the lack of experience in dialogue by the majority of the Muslims militated against any real intellectual exchange. Each morning a paper

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was delivered by one Muslim and one Christian on the same topic. i.e., the common religious bases of Christianity and Islam, how to overcome mutual prejudices, commitment to social action in the two religions, and the relationship of the two religions to ideology. Comments were then given from the floor, but they tended to be one speech after another. In the afternoon-evening session the panelists on the stage made their remarks. The Christian participants often raised questions for their Muslim partners, but the Muslims rarely responded to them. There was almost never any back-and-forth exchange. Nevertheless, there was expressed on the Muslim side an overriding desire for further contact, collaboration and conversation. More could not have been expected from the first major international Christian-Muslim dialogue. In fact, it is amazing that it happened at all, let alone that it could have gone so well.

Point two. There is no question but that Qadafi's prestige in the Muslim world has increased immensely as a result of this spectacular dialogue—and its even more spectacular ending, discussed below. Qadafi's appearance at the dialogue showed to the world a man of razor-keen intellect and charismatic power. He is a force to be reckoned with.

Point three. Judging from the speeches and comments, the question of Palestine and Israel was very much on the agenda of practically all the Muslims—and the Arab Christians. This was to be foreseen, and consequently Msgr. Rossano, Secretary of the Secretariat for Non-Christians, arranged weeks ahead that political matters would not be discussed. The Christian lecturers and panelists were very disciplined in this regard—as were also the two heads of the Libyan delegation and several of the Muslim panelists. However, most of the Muslim lecturers and panelists obviously did not see the Palestine-Israel matter as politics, or did not feel bound by the agreed-upon restrictions. They delivered violent attacks on "Zionism."

But the stunning aspect of this issue occurred only on the final day, at the ceremonial closing and reading of the joint communiqué. Whereas the Christians studiously avoided all reference to Palestine and Israel all week long—masterfully led by Cardinal Pignedoli, President of the Secretariat for Non-Christians—the final joint communiqué contained the following two highly political statements on Palestine and Israel:

> 20) The two delegations distinguish between Judaism and Zionism, inasmuch as Zionism is a racist, enemy movement.
>
> 21) The two delegations confirm the national rights of the Palestinian people and their right to return to their land, confirm the Arab nature of Jerusalem and reject all plans to Judaize, divide or internationalize it . . . demand the liberation of all detainees in occupied Palestine, notably the Muslim Ulemas and Christian clergy [Archbishop Capucci, presumably] . . . demand the liberation of all occupied territories. . . .

It was immediately clear to many Christians present that these statements, if indeed really agreed to by the Catholic Church, would make the dialogue with the Jews impossible. At the close of the session people rushed to the stage, and when I asked Msgr. Rossano if what I had heard was true, that the Catholic delegation had agreed to the statements on Palestine and Israel, in stunned fashion he stammered, "No, no, it's a mistake, it's a mistake!" There was confusion everywhere among the Christians. As Christian observers from the floor and many news reporters pressed around the Christian delegation (some newsmen ran to telex the communiqué to the world), the embarrassment and confusion became ever more intense. The scheduled press conference was canceled. When it was shortly thereafter rumored that the Holy See and Libya had arranged to establish diplomatic relations and that permission was granted to open a church in Benghazi, the affair appeared even more sinister. One observer remarked, "We have once again played Judas and have sold another Jew for thirty pieces of silver!"

But as the facts slowly emerged during that night and the next day, the picture of what happened was not one of intrigue, but more like a Laurel and Hardy movie. A committee composed of four Muslims and four Arabic-speaking Catholics met late into the night working on the communiqué. Although the Catholic delegation had prepared a draft, they in fact used the Muslim-prepared draft as a working basis. The drafting committee divided itself up into four pairs and each worked on separate sections, and perhaps none of the Christians saw the whole communiqué, with one exception, difficult as that may be to imagine. I could not learn for certain which of the Christians worked on sections 20 and 21, but the signature of a member of the Christian delegation is on every page of the original Arabic version of the communiqué.

I was with Msgr. Rossano when he was told by one of the drafting committee that neither the French nor English translation (the other two official languages of the conference) would be ready by the beginning of the final session, when the communiqué was to be read. What is puzzling is that neither Cardinal Pignedoli nor Msgr. Rossano insisted on having the contents of the communiqué translated at least orally for them before allowing it to be read. But apparently that is what happened, and consequently they, along with all the Christians, except one, were stunned when numbers 20 and 21 were read.

The Christians' agony continued through the night and into the next afternoon as they strove to extricate themselves from the debacle. At mid-day February 7, as I spoke with Cardinal Pignedoli in the car about to take him to the airport, he read over and signed a hast-

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ily hand-written French text to be read over the Vatican radio at 3 P.M. that day and simultaneously at a press conference in Tripoli, Libya. It said that since numbers 20 and 21 of the Tripoli communiqué contained matters beyond the jurisdiction of the Secretariat for Non-Christians, they were being turned over to the Vatican authorities in whose sole competence they lay. As a matter of fact, on February 11 "the Holy See declared it cannot accept such points [20 and 21] because its content does not correspond substantially to the well-known Vatican position."

One irony is that, as one of the Muslim delegation told me, the Muslims were agreed among themselves ahead of time to withdraw points 20 and 21 at the expected Christian demurral—but it was not forthcoming. But even after the public reading of the communiqué Muslims assured me that points 20 and 21 were of secondary importance to them and that their later disavowal by Vatican authorities would not substantially affect the historic outpouring of Muslim and Christian good will and commitment to build out the dialogue and collaboration. It is to this end the Muslim and Vatican delegations agreed to set up a permanent mixed Commission to implement that good will. Hopefully the dialogues between Christianity and both Judaism and Islam will soon lead to a three-way dialogue among all the sons and daughters of Abraham and Sarah.

LEONARD SWIDLER

(Leonard Swidler is Editor of the Journal of Ecumenical Studies *and Professor of Inter-religious Dialogue, Temple University.)*

WASHINGTON REPORT

'DARKNESS AT NOON'

Not in the ominous sense that Arthur Koestler used the phrase, but, nevertheless, this year's presidential campaign is being reported with more heat than light. It wasn't supposed to be this way.

After the last presidential election, four years ago, reporters promised to repent. They gathered at Harvard and appeared on both public and commercial television to flay themselves a bit. On TV and in Sunday analytical articles, they acknowledged their excessive emphasis on campaign techniques and personalities. Issues—state, regional and national—became obscured in the doing, they conceded.

It won't happen again, voters, they promised.

Four years later, we're in the midst of another presidential campaign and not much has changed—at least, not after the first two of 31 presidential primaries have taken place. Prior to the New Hampshire primary late last month and the one in Massachusetts early this month, we learned a lot about the candidates' personalities (and those of their families). We read and heard a lot about the strategies and tactics of their staffs—and the ambitious jockeying among them as to who would be the primary advisor of each of the various candidates. We were told which candidate spent the most time in New Hampshire. We were told, depending on which newspaper we read, which candidate purchased the most radio campaign "spots." We were able to gather around the water-cooler at work secure in the knowledge as to which candidate is most despised by William Loeb, the talented hater and overrated publisher of the Manchester *Union-Leader*, the only statewide circulated daily newspaper in New Hampshire.

Overall, the coverage of the campaigns in the two states seemed like a rerun of an old grade-B motion picture starring John Wayne. The *New York Times*, which raised hell with the CIA's faults awhile back, has so far been inclined to cover the candidates in a descriptive, rather than prescriptive, fashion. Two days before the New Hampshire primary, one network, on its regular Sunday forum program, had only one contestant as guest, although another did have several contestants on its counterpart program.

In place of pieties about fairness, why not have all three major networks carry the same candidate interview program on the Sunday before Election Day? Instead of insisting that each day's editions during an election campaign require news stories, why not skip those days when the reporters covering campaigns report to their editors that "there's not much doing"? No news can be fair coverage. Long stories about campaigning in the lives of the candidates can be unfair as well as boring. Repetitious stories about whether Carter or U.S. Representative Udall of Arizona or Senator Bayh of Indiana —or someone else—will win the New Hampshire primary should have been "spiked" (not printed). Instead, let the voters decide.

There is another problem about campaign coverage. Even the most conscientious and able of political reporters find themselves after awhile becoming part of the political trade. They lose perspective and, so to speak, write incessantly about the trees and not the forest. Perceptive editors move other staff reporters around to different assignments from time to time on the grounds that a reporter, as human being, is apt, in spite of him- or herself, to become a bit cozy with the Mayor and/or Council members after a few years assigned to City Hall

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—or become the amanuensis tor the local police chief if left to cover crime news for say, five years. Just as a congressman is no better experienced after ten years in office, so with political reporters. With exceptions, political correspondents start writing into their news stories their biases and prejudices after a few years of covering campaigns (or covering Congress or the White House for twenty years, as happens).

It is acceptable to take a point of view that positions on issues by a candidate may become known through the prism of personality, as long as it is understood that the most articulate candidate is not necessarily espousing the most sensible positions. A problem is that many, many political reporters don't understand major issues —and their nuances. This suggests alternative coverage —or, at least, a pilot program to see if this alternative would work.

The superficiality of a candidate's position on major issues, foreign and domestic, would be brought to light in a prompter and more comprehensive way, if, for example, the *Washington Post* assigned Bernard Nossiter, a foreign correspondent, Timothy O'Toole, who covers science, and Morton Mintz, whose prize-winning stories and books have exposed the hazards of consumer products, ranging from the automobile to lipstick. Or, correspondingly, the *New York Times* recalled Richard Halloran from Tokyo and put him to work with Peter Kihss of its metropolitan staff on this year's presidential campaign. Or, as a middle way, assign them major roles with the political reporters now covering the campaigns.

No reporter, however honored and capable, is superior to the "beat" (assignment) he covers, often for most of his career.

In addition, a system of rotation has another asset. An insistence upon frequent stories, however "thin" in substance, cheats readers, however capable and knowledgeable a reporter, or columnist, is. Many years ago, Joseph Kraft wrote a monthly public-affairs column, The Easy Chair, for a monthly magazine. A few years ago, he became a syndicated columnist producing three columns a week for client-newspapers. His monthly column was uniformly of high caliber; the same can not be said for the other columns. This is not to disparage Kraft. He is among the best and brightest in the business. But such a demand upon one's abilities is too much after a few years for even the most talented.

It's time for a change, one, it is hoped, that will be adopted by newpaper editors. If not, there may be some widespread finger-pointing from outside the trade that may bode ill for what Thomas Carlyle called the "Fourth Estate."

SISYPHUS

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ROY SCHEELE

THE CLOUDS CLOSE OVER

Under a spit of snow
the fields are lying low.

The path behind a barn
fills as if never worn,

heading out to the fields
whenever the wind yields

and the way lies clear. Here
all that was far draws near,

yet nothing's gathered in
out of the scouring din

but an idea of shape,
a kind of contour map

in which the frozen pond
looks to the horizon

while through the drifting grass
the wind makes one long pass.

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HISTORY ON TV

PETER STEINFELS

THE COMMON accusation that Americans are unmindful of their past may not survive 1976. The reason is simple. No longer do we mark great public moments by listening patiently to orations or sermons; the corresponding rite for our day is a "special." A "special" is a unit of television time which (a) is longer than half an hour; (b) is devoted to a single topic or entertainer; and (c) is foreshadowed by large portentous advertisements in all the newspapers. Since the great public moment at hand is the Bicentennial, and therefore a rehearsal of our national past generally, it is natural that we should be inundated with historical "specials" —dramatic reenactments of everything from the struggle for independence to the Cuban missile crisis. John Adams and his assorted kin, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Sojourner Truth, Abraham Lincoln, Walt Whitman, Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, Harry Truman and John F. Kennedy have been, or will be, taking their place alongside Archie Bunker, Mary Tyler Moore, and Burt and Ernie.

So high has the flood of historical "specials" risen that a recent "Arts and Leisure" section of the Sunday *New York Times* had to call upon three distinguished American historians as television reviewers. These historians made some critical observations on the tendency of televised history to shy from political complexity in favor of accepted piety and personal drama; but some of the "specials" met with their approval, and much of the effort at least survived their scrutiny. I have myself enjoyed *"The Adams Chronicles,"* even when, or occasionally especially when, they seem to relax into a variety of national high-school pageant. And should my fingers be mangled in my typewriter keys or some other accident prevent me from holding a good book to read, I might actually watch some of the others.

Though Americans may learn about their past in 1976, we may nonetheless remain ignorant about history. The *Times* headlined its scholarly reviews with a question, "Television Celebrates Our Past—But Is It History?" By "history" was meant, evidently, what "actually happened," though assuming, indeed insisting upon the necessity of some selecting, shaping intelligence. The tension in that headline was wound up in the contrast between "history," presumably accurate and *sine ire et studio*, and "celebrates," suggestive of uncritical approval if not of unvarnished chauvinism. But what if, instead, one contrasted "history" with "past," thinking of "history" not as a finished order of events, lived once and "reenacted" on the small screens in our homes, but as that very process, occurring in the present, of probing, questioning, selecting and shaping the evidence which remains of past events? It is in this sense that all the TV "specials," however good, bad, or mediocre at representing the past, have yet to communicate to their viewers anything about "history."

The assignment really would not be so difficult to carry off. One could focus on some important development, of which the television audience may be presumed to have a shadowy awareness: the Boston Massacre, the Boston Tea Party, the debates leading to the Declaration of Independence or the Constitution—or to move into later history, as some "specials" already have, the outbreak of the Civil War or the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan. Using a combination of dramatic enactments and *Rashomon*-like reenactments, on-camera interviews with historians, and visual deployment of symbolic places and objects such as was done so strikingly in the popular *Ascent of Man* series, the program could treat its subject in the manner of successive waves of historians, passing over the same episode, say four or five times, each time adding complexities, contradictions, new interpretations, political implications. Such a production need not be dry; on the contrary it should utilize all the devices, humorous as well as serious, of dramatic narratives and investigative documentaries. It could project the spirit of detection, the tension of debate, and the challenge of questions to be resolved.

Would the point of such an exercise be only to instill a sense of relativism about the past? I would hope not. The point would be that history is not a wax museum, the spectators almost as passive in their silent contemplation as the frozen figures they observe. History is an active effort to understand what we are by understanding what we were. As we pose new questions about ourselves, as we shift our perspectives and reexamine our evidence, history is full of changes and, for the open-minded, surprises.

My proposal would not be good for a series, will not drive *Sanford and Son* out of the ratings, will not slow down ABC in the great network war or make a contender out of PBS. But given a few of those ads suggesting that watching Channel X tonight is a patriotic duty, given the apparent willingness of sponsors to associate themselves with the past in understandable preference to the present, and given the possible interest of official agencies like the National Endowment for the Humanities in projects like this, the idea, I believe, is viable.

Of course we could always wait until BBC does it.

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THE URBAN FISCAL CRISIS

EDWARD S. HERMAN and RICHARD B. DU BOFF

A short-term manifestation of institutionalized decline

Most of America's large cities have been suffering from deep-seated, cumulating disorders for decades: spreading blight and slum conditions, expanding pools of the chronically unemployed, increasing crime and insecurity, and a steady exodus of business and the more affluent. The urban "crisis" is now sufficiently long-standing that it must be regarded as an American institution; so cherished that no national commitment has ever been made to cope with it with any of the dedication applied to sending a man to the moon or waging war in Vietnam.

The current fiscal crisis is the short-term manifestation of our institutionalized urban decline, as city managers try to grapple with forces over which they have very little control. Their problems have been exacerbated by inflation, by militant and effective bargaining on the part of proliferating state and municipal unions (4.5 million of the 11.6 million state and local government workers now belong to unions or educational associations), and by recession-induced increases in welfare obligations. At the same time, there have been tightening limits and, more recently, downward pressures on revenues. The inevitable financial squeeze has raised the specter of default, which in turn has driven up borrowing costs of state and local governments (SLGs) or rendered their bond issues virtually unsalable—adding further to their fiscal difficulties. The most conspicuous short-term effect (and probable impact) over the next two or three years, however, is not a large number of defaults but a radical pruning of outlays and services in circumstances that call for more rather than less.

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The process of retrenchment is well along across the country, with payroll reductions and diminished outlays for welfare, education and public works planned from Florida to California, from Medford, Oregon (pop: 33,900) to Greater Boston (pop: 3,386,000). New York City, of course, has already absorbed wholesale reductions of workers on the City payrolls, as well as hikes in taxes and transit fares—although financier Felix Rohatyn, chairman of the Municipal Assistance Corporation and a principal architect of the financial "rescue" attempt warns that "the pain is just beginning . . ." In coming years New York will have to undergo "the most brutal kind of financial and fiscal exercise any community in the country will ever have to face."

The social implications of this frank declaration may be glimpsed from some proposed cutbacks for 1976: outlays for New York City parks down 67 percent from 1975, roads and highways down 43 percent, schools down 30 percent, culture and recreation down 22 percent, plus a $600 million slash in capital expenditures (no new schools will be started). Of course these cuts, which come on top of earlier, 1975 spending decreases and personnel layoffs, may eventually be self-defeating. Such measures are bound to have a negative multiplier impact, beginning with a furloughed city employee who buys less food and clothing, fewer city purchases of supplies from firms which must then retrench, and so on. New York City's unemployment rate—11.7 percent, or two-fifths above the national average—will undoubtedly rise, taxable incomes will fall, and the budget crisis may stand no closer to being resolved. In the nation at large the fiscal crisis of SLGs is exerting a deflationary effect that may not be fully understood in Washington.

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The cities . . are turning into the repositories of the poor, the blacks and other victims of a society whose labor markets are shaped by the initiatives and requirements of private profitmaking.

The contention that the urban fiscal crisis is a product of municipal "mismanagement" is a diversionary tactic. New York City certainly has engaged in some questionable budgetary accounting practices, and its budget is also inflated by an inefficient use of manpower and by compensation levels (especially pensions) slightly in excess of that found in comparable corporate employment. But the urban decline and fiscal crisis are not confined to New York City. The inability of the cities to meet the demands being placed upon them represents a complex of political decisions as to where the social surplus is to be allocated, which "excesses" are tolerable and which are not. In its own way, the federal government has been incomparably more wasteful than New York or Detroit over the past 20 to 30 years. Federal resources allocated to socially negative boondoggles, most often Pentagon-inspired, have set a standard for waste unduplicated by SLGs; and this huge resource drain, plus heavy reliance by Federal Reserve monetary managers on tight money and high interest rates to combat inflation, have made it drastically more expensive for SLGs to finance their needs through the bond market. An irresponsible federal government can get away with *its* mismanagement because of a greater taxing capacity, control over the Federal Reserve and the money supply, and its resultant ability to support with ease a volume of debt almost twice as large as that issued by the aggregate of SLGs.

The urban fiscal crisis is a reflection of national priorities on resource use and, more fundamentally, an intensifying struggle over income shares. The cities, and especially the urban cores of the northeast and midwest, are turning into the repositories of the poor, the blacks and other victims of a society whose labor markets are shaped by the initiatives, and requirements, of private profitmaking. As whites flee the cities, blacks continue to move in, and the latter now comprise one in every four city dwellers (against one in six in 1960). New York City, for instance, lost 1.6 million whites to its suburbs between 1955 and 1975—and gained 1.5 million poorer blacks and Puerto Ricans. Median family income in central cities was 105 percent of nationwide family income in 1960; it dropped to 94 percent by 1974. Of all Americans living below the federally-defined poverty level, 27 percent resided in central cities in 1960, 37 percent in 1974. The income-generating base of core cities declines as white families and businesses move outward. Any effort by municipal governments to ward off budgetary disaster by increasing taxes simply accelerates the exodus of the better-heeled taxpayers. Income, and power, are shifted toward the suburbs and ex-urbs.

Nationally, the same trends are being played out on a broader, regional plane. Kirkpatrick Sale's *Power Shift* hypothesis (see *Commonweal*, November 21, 1975) appears to be supported by the most recent data on personal incomes and taxable property. The military-industrial-oil-leisure complex sections of the country have been growing more rapidly than the older regions. Between 1960 and 1974, the share of aggregate personal income going to the New England, the Middle Atlantic, and the East North Central states (Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin) dropped from 50.2 to 46.1 percent, or by 4.1 percentage points. The corresponding gain accrued mainly to Georgia, Florida, Arkansas, Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma, Arizona, New Mexico, and California; from 1960 to 1974 their combined share of the nation's personal income rose by 2.5 percentage points, from 23.7 to 26.2 percent. Per capita incomes remain lower in these southern and western "rim" states, but, with the exception of California, they have been increasing faster than per capita incomes in the older northern and eastern states. Similarly, while per capita assessed property values are still lower in the cities of the southern and western states than in the northeastern and north central states, between 1961 and 1971 they doubled in the former while increasing only 56 per cent in the slower growing states.

Recent national administrations have encouraged, and taken political advantage of, these trends. Lyndon Johnson channeled significant portions of defense and space contracts into his native Texas, and the Nixon "revolution" was a form of "southern strategy," whose basic ingredients were bigger and better military budgets, a thinly-veiled resort to racist voter appeals, and a not-so-benign neglect of the poor and urban blacks effectuated by a ruthless trimming of what little remained of the modest "Great Society" programs of the 1960s. The latest installment in the continuing dismantlement of federal welfare programs is the decision by the Ford administration to cut manpower training funds—during a period of compelling need for them—in 14 of the 15 largest municipalities in the country. On January 8 the Labor Department acknowledged that there had been a significant drop in funding of these job training programs for the nation's inner cities. Only San Diego is slated to receive more funds over the next year.

Military spending provides a still more important example of how political conservatism and resource allocation interact to penalize the older urban agglomera-

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tions and reward the "sunbelt" states. A recent *New York Times* series states that in 1974 the latter managed to collect $13 billion more in federal expenditures than they paid in federal taxes, whereas nine Northern states suffered a net loss of $20.5 billion. It seems clear that the Pentagon is the source of most of this redistribution, the sunbelt states getting almost 50 percent of military-research funds, over 40 percent of prime military contracts, and the benefits of federal funding of 140 military installations, more than the rest of the country combined. Even transfer payments moved disproportionately in the same direction, with two out of three military retirees living in the sunbelt and drawing billions in retirement pay.

A decision at the federal level to spend money on the military thus leads to a specific geographical pattern of job opportunities that benefits particular areas and bypasses and damages others—the latter including the Northeast and Northcentral states. The symbiotic relationship between the beneficiary states and the military establishment has been self-reinforcing, strengthening conservative political tendencies, which helps sustain large national military budgets and channel them into this friendly terrain. Military expenditure is also a job-loser overall. A hypothetical trade-off for the years 1968-1972 between military spending and civilian outlays, constructed by a Lansing, Mich., public-interest research group, found that a reallocation of the Pentagon budget to civilian uses would have created about 840,000 additional jobs. The older states and cities thus suffer from both an overall job loss and an unfavorable regional pattern of federal resource allocation. This has not prevented sunbelt representatives from opposing "bail-outs" and other forms of aid to troubled Northern cities on the ground of alleged regional inequities.

Meeting State and Local Needs

It is generally known that government outlays (federal plus SLG) have grown faster than private expenditures over the past several decades. Less well known is the importance, and relatively more rapid increase, of SLG spending. SLG purchases of real goods and services, as opposed to transfer payments, increased some ten-fold between 1950 and 1974 (federal purchases grew six times). And while total outlays of the federal government are higher than those of SLGs (in 1974: $299 billion versus $206 billion), actual purchases of goods and services by SLGs substantially exceed those of the federal government ($192 billion, against $110 billion in 1974). A good part of the federal increases—and nearly two-thirds of its total outlays—have been in the form of transfer payments: programs like old age pensions, medicare, or scholarship grants that exert no public sector claim on current output, as would be the case with federal or state construction of mass transit facilities, or the purchase of a typewriter, or the services of a municipal garbage collection agency.

The federal government has been preoccupied with the 'larger picture' in a way reminiscent of Dickens' Mrs. Jellyby devoting life and resources to the faraway natives of Boorioboola-Gha.

One significant federal transfer item is grants-in-aid revenue sharing to SLGs, which increased by $39 billion from 1950 through 1974. But by far the biggest federal transfer expansion has come through social security —reflected in a rise of transfers to individuals of $90 billion between 1950 and 1974. This might appear to be a notable contribution to human welfare, and conservatives have pounced on it to prove the adequacy (or excess) of federal support for the "welfare state" and the reasonableness (or insufficiency) of expenditures for national defense. A transfer payment, however, does not directly affect resource allocation; it merely redistributes income from one sector of the private economy to another. What is more, social security transfers have been closely tied to social security payroll taxes, possibly the most regressive of all major taxes imposed in the United States today. This tax has been increased seven times in the past ten years to pay for enlarged benefits, on the fiction that all recipients of social security at one time or another contribute to an insurance fund that will cover their subsequent benefits. In fact, with Congress inclined to adjust benefits upward to offset price inflation, this "fund" is perennially in deficit, and outlays from it will increasingly be met out of general tax revenues on some sort of ad hoc, year-by-year basis. Confining the stipulated revenue source to the old payroll tax represents a political trade-off, in which the national administration agrees to step up benefits for the elderly and sick so long as the funding comes mainly from the pockets of ordinary low- and middle-income citizens in the traditionally regressive mode.

In 1970, 4.8 percent of the first $7,800 of a person's income was taken as a payroll tax; in January 1976

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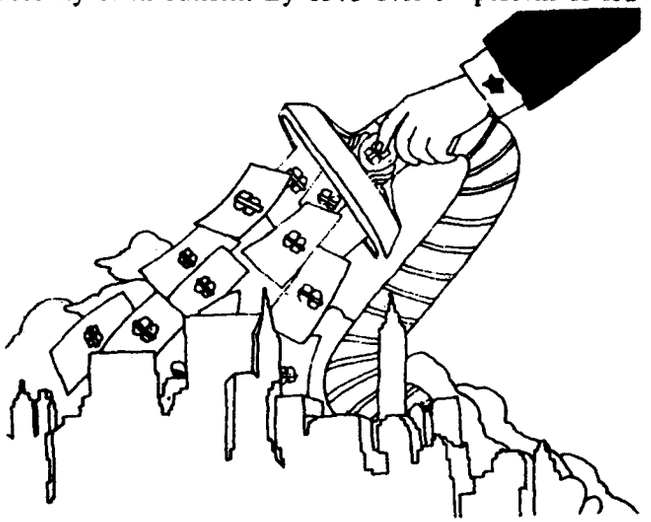
the rate was up to 5.85 percent of the first $15,300, whether the worker in question earned $5,300 per year, or $153,000. (President Ford proposed a further increase starting in 1977—to 6.15 percent—in his State of the Union message of January 1976.) The resultant higher tax yields have in effect permitted the role of the (mildly) progressive corporate and individual income taxes to decline; federal income tax rates have been cut three times since 1964. In 1960, 67 percent of Washington's budget receipts flowed in from individual and corporate income taxes, 16 percent from social security contributions. By 1975 over 30 percent of fed-



eral receipts came from social security, while the combined income taxes produced only 56 percent. The social security payroll deductions are especially burdensome to younger and lower-paid workers, who must pay immediately, and on their first dollar of earnings, half of the total 11.7 percent payroll tax rate—with benefits to accrue in the distant future. Since the employer's half of the payroll tax is probably passed on to the public via lower wages and higher prices, the tax is far more onerous than the regular income tax for the bulk of American families.

Compared to total transfer spending, which climbed by nearly $140 billion, federal expenditures made directly for goods and services went up by $91 billion during 1950-1974. Of this total, $65 billion (71 percent) took the form of greater *military* outlays; only $26 billion was allocated to increasing non-defense expenditures. This lopsided expenditure pattern prevailed during a quarter-century of exceptionally rapid economic growth. America's population grew from 152 million to 211 million (39 percent), secondary school enrollments doubled, real gross national product more than doubled, and real per capita personal incomes rose 85 percent. Our postwar growth surge greatly enlarged demands for ordinary public services (sewers, schools), but it also generated an ever larger demand for offsets to the negative by-products and "spillover effects" of modern free market expansion. Modern technology, and above all the continued spread of the automobile, have had a severe impact on the city and its environment in the forms of increased congestion, pollution, waste disposal problems, the uneconomic sprawl into the suburbs and a decline of public transportations systems. The profits from this growth were, of course, "internalized"—private business firms made them and disposed of them as they saw fit. The social costs of growth have been largely externalized at the expense of the public at large.

The statistics cited above show how very little the federal government did to alleviate the urban-focused burden of growth: it increased its nonmilitary services at the rate of little more than $1 billion per year from 1950 to 1974. The thankless task of meeting the demands of the civil society fell chiefly to SLGs. Their growth-related outlays on schools, highways, police, fire, sanitation, parks and recreation, and water supply jumped from $14.2 billion to $109.7 billion in 1973—almost eight-fold. Per capita expenditures of SLGs rose five times over this period.

The federal government has been preoccupied with the "larger picture," in a way reminiscent of Dickens' Mrs. Jellyby devoting life and resources to the faraway natives of Boorioboola-Gha—totally disregarding her household, in a pitiful state of neglect and resentment. (At least Mrs. Jellyby and her friends were harmless to the natives; they knitted woolen underwear for them rather than supplying them with M-16 rifles.) The irony is that many novel federal programs from the New Deal through the Great Society were begun because of the ineffective performance and corruption of local government and the essentially sound belief that only a public body with the resources, and the capacity for taking a unified national view of costs and benefits, could deal with the demands of unemployment, urban decay, pollution, and the deterioration of regional transportation networks. This view was—and is—valid, but since the Second World War the federal government's role has become largely one of a military entrepreneur.

There is no economic growth factor inherent in national defense outlays: increases in population and per capita incomes do not call for a larger nuclear deterrent or conventional forces. Barring war, defense expenditures *ought* to fall relative to gross national product; but, as a percentage of a steadily rising GNP, military spending has grown from 1 percent in 1936 to 4.2 percent in 1950 and 5.6 percent in 1974 (a calculation based on a highly conservative definition of "national defense expenditures"). And for much of the most recent period military outlays averaged above 7 or 8 percent of GNP.

These outlays, however, are determined by "non-economic" factors. One is the perceived requirements of U.S. corporate business and the ruling elements of both major political parties for armed forces capable of

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protecting, and enlarging, America's sphere of economic interests, which is the most extensive in history (see Du Boff and Herman, "Corporate Dollars and Foreign Policy," *Commonweal*, April 21, 1972). A second factor is the power of interlocking vested interests within industry, labor, the universities and the military to command resources and jobs. The federal government was the natural focus of a coalescence of both these factors once the critical decision was taken by the Truman administration that a high level of arms spending would henceforth be necessary to deter "Communist aggression." Furthermore, it should not be surprising that since the late 1940s the primary Keynesian tool for imparting fiscal stimulus to the economy to counter slump and stagnation has been military spending. On several occasions the executive branch has stepped up the defense budget in the face of impending recession, a policy sure to gain quicker acceptance than, say, a countercyclical proposal to initiate a large-scale program of low-cost housing and urban rat control. The upshot is that the "military-industrial complex" has been able to divert to its own ends 61 percent of the increase in federal purchases since 1950.

The Power To Owe And Tax

The federal government has broader constitutional freedom of action than state and local authorities both in raising revenue and in issuing debt. And it has long since preempted the most fertile revenue sources, leaving the lower level government authorities in a position of fiscal inferiority. SLG tax and debt powers were tightly constrained by law during the 19th century, and again in the 1930s, in response to periodic SLG defaults—eight states defaulted in the recession of 1837 and some 20% of SLG issues were in default during the 1930s—and out of fear of the recklessness that often characterized 19th century local government financial practices. Through time, and with burgeoning SLG needs, many of these restrictions have been relaxed; but the process is far from complete, and now it encounters among the electorate a hardening of resistance to any new taxes whatsoever.

Passage of the 1913 constitutional amendment allowed the federal government to levy income taxes. Washington soon took up the option, and by the late 1920s personal and corporate income taxes had become the mainstay of the federal fisc (displacing customs duties and excise fees). By 1974, 59 percent of federal budget receipts were accounted for by taxes on income and another 30 percent by social security taxes. With given rates, rising personal and corporate incomes yield increasing tax revenues; so that the general revenue of the federal government is derived mainly from a progressive tax rate system strongly responsive to economic growth. Most of this lucrative direct tax harvest is then utilized by Washington to develop its military establishment.

SLGs on the other hand have been dependent upon property, sales and excise taxes. These made up 78 percent of SLG tax revenues in 1950, a proportion that was only marginally reduced during the long economic boom that followed. Despite greater recourse by SLGs to income taxes in the postwar period, 72 percent of SLG tax revenues still came from the traditional property-sales-excises sources in 1973. Not only are such taxes regressive, they are less sensitive to economic growth than income-based taxes—which means that rates must be sharply escalated if they are to produce more revenue. States and municipalities have done just that over the past decade, but at the cost of much dissatisfaction and opposition. At present any further hikes in the traditional taxes would appear to be limited by business community threats to move away, to areas with "more reasonable tax burdens."

The gap between the financial capacity of SLGs and the service demands on them had become so wide by the 1960s that the federal government was gradually forced into the picture indirectly via increasing grants-in-aid, revenue sharing and a certain number of direct federal programs. Total federal aid to SLGs was up from $11 billion in 1965 to $46 billion in 1974. This 1974 total includes general revenue sharing payments of $6.1 billion, urban renewal funding of $1.2 billion Medicaid payments of $5.8 billion, EPA subsidies of $1.6 billion (mainly for the construction of waste disposal facilities), and public assistance payments of $5.4 billion, among other outlays. These are substantial sums, and it may seem ungenerous to cavil about their adequacy. Still, they must be considered in the context of the huge demands being imposed on SLGs.

The $46 billion aid total of 1974 is far less than the *increase* in SLG outlays for education since 1950 (over $60 billion), and barely exceeds the direct (unassisted) outlays of SLGs for health and welfare, which grew from $6.2 billion in 1950 to $44.6 billion in 1974. Federal aid to education, far and away the largest SLG expenditure, has been extremely modest—the $46 billion SLG aid total of 1974 includes $1.7 billion for primary and secondary schools, which is less than 5 percent of SLG outlays for local schools. Even in the field of health and welfare the more substantial assistance of the federal government has typically matched SLG contributions, and in the context of mounting demands SLGs have had to foot an enormous bill.

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Under the impact of regional and class conflicts of interest, and log-rolling accommodations, federal aid has also suffered from a tendency to spread benefits widely rather than concentrating on points of need. We have seen that taxable assessed property values have increased more rapidly in cities of the sunbelt states, while at the same time they have required fewer or less expensive municipal services than many of the older declining cities. In 1972-73 the cost of municipal services per person was $141 in growing cities, $240 in declining cities, and $637 in New York City. Federal aid has responded to differences in need, but a significant proportion of federal resources have been allocated on other bases.

Principles & Possibilities Of Reform

The technical problems of relieving the urban crisis are difficult, but theoretically manageable. The *political* problems are severe—and may even be unsolvable in the immediate future. The federal government has the revenue capability, but it lacks the social purpose: its eye is currently on Angola and its purse strings have long been loose only for national "defense." SLGs have the responsibilities for civil society—by default—but neither the resources nor the breadth of political scope and vision, given the fact that modern urban problems are national in a literal sense.

One proposed solution to the urban crisis is metropolitanization, i.e., the consolidation of all the fragmented communities of metropolitan areas into single political-fiscal units. Some cities (Indianapolis, Phoenix, Houston and Dallas), have found it possible to take this route, extending their jurisdiction into the expanding suburbs by systematic absorption. But they are the exceptions. As a solution to the more deep-seated urban malaise, this route presents several difficulties. First, it would still not improve the overall fiscal capacity of SLGs relative to the federal government. Secondly, it would still not encompass a large enough territory to capture all important spill-over effects and to preclude inter-area competition. Finally, the fragmentation process (suburbanization and the escape of those able to do so from the problems of central cities) has created conflicts of interest among local political units that make voluntary consolidation ever more difficult. Consolidation could be forced or encouraged by state and federal authority, but it offers no ready panacea for the urban crisis.

The most promising route to solutions almost certainly involves an expanded role for the federal government. Only Washington has the operating scope to take into account spill-over effects, and it has the resources —tax capability and debt issuing powers—to meet urban needs. A 20 percent reduction in national defense outlays, which might well *enhance* national security, would provide an excellent starter. It would allow the federal government to take over entirely the public assistance budget of SLGs, and to begin investing in public transportation systems and urban reconstruction. A restructuring of federal taxes to allow more room for state and local taxes would help—especially closing the gaping loopholes for the affluent and terminating the use of the regressive payroll tax to finance social security. Revenue sharing, tied more effectively to need, can also be a useful short-term expedient for allowing SLGs to participate in the superior tax resources of the federal government. It was used by Nixon, not as a supplementary sharing device but rather as a substitute for federal responsibilities simultaneously terminated. (For Reagan and Ford, also, federal cutbacks and "consolidations" of programs are thinly veiled attempts to reduce social expenditures under the rhetorical guise of "decentralization" and reducing the "burden" of government.)

At bottom, the real problem is that the American socio-economic system does not readily respond to mere human need, even at home, that cannot be geared closely to the private profit-making process. The breakdown of the 1930s and the burning of the cities in 1967 could elicit national programs, but usually patchwork in planning, under-funded and petering out in the absence of renewed crisis. One of the few federal programs with massive funding over an extended period has been highways—i.e., one in which a powerful congeries of auto and oil companies, real estate and construction businesses, and building trades unions provided a critical support base. Comparable funding has never been available for metropolitan and interurban transport systems (in 1974 federal aid for highways totaled $4.5 billion; for mass transportation, $348 million).

In our Bicentennial year Gerald Ford sees it as a political plus to recommend a big boost in military spending and a slashing of social outlays on a wide front; and Edmund Muskie's political sensors lead him to pledge a "tough spending ceiling" and to admonish us against the delusion that problems can be solved "by simply throwing federal dollars at them." Altering this picture will require mass organization arising out of grass roots interests and purposes, prepared to combat the overwhelming impact of corporate enterprise on national priorities. Establishing such organizations, *de novo*, or via a stunning transformation of American trade unionism, should rank high on the public agenda for the 1970s.

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ASLEEP IN THE LORD

PETER HEINEGG

Death comes to St. Andrew's

Lord Jesus Christ, King of glory, deliver the souls of all the faithful departed from the pains of hell and from the bottomless pit. Save them from the lion's jaws; let them not be engulfed in Tartarus nor swallowed up in darkness. Let St. Michael the standard-bearer bring them into that holy light which thou of old didst promise to Abraham and his posterity.

—Offertory from the Mass for the Dead

Death was a permanent resident at St. Andrew's. One wing of the first floor, across from the refectory, housed an infirmary-nursing home for the old Jesuits who had been sent there to die. Novices did periodic duty in the *valetudinarium*, serving meals, cleaning, and doing dishes, and we could watch the progress of a new inmate, from his arrival, over the course of months of senile disintegration, till the ringing of the *De Profundis* announced his death. At the heart-sickening sound of the nine spaced chimes the whole house fell silent. Wherever you were, you had to freeze in your tracks and pray for the dead man's soul, although, because there were usually several possible candidates, you might not know whom you were praying for. Till you did, it was like the death of Everyman. Most often the victim was somebody who had been sinking and had already been anointed. Sometimes it was a surprise, as when they found a vigorous old priest dead in his room, killed by a stroke as he sat peeling an orange.

If a man died during the night, the *De Profundis* would not be rung until after Angelus, at 6 A.M. We would all rise in our pews, poised to file out for morning meditation, when the bells would fling us to our knees. Since the Great Silence still prevailed, I could not ask anyone, who had died, and I had to wait till the Rector broke the news at the beginning of mass. Sooner or later a note would go up on the bulletin board with the exact time of death and other details.

Wakes and funerals in the seminary were horrible. The body would be laid out in the front parlor, where the night before the burial we recited the full fifteen decades of the rosary. If the deceased was a priest, he would be dressed in a cheap set of Roman vestments, with his hands clasping a crucifix (the same one he had been given on his vow day). The bodies all had that shrunken, shriveled look of men who had been a long time dying. Once we prayed before a closed coffin, when a manic-depressive priest had wandered from his sickroom down to the railroad tracks and been hit by a freight train. They gathered up the pieces, but they had to spray them with a strong deodorant, and if you stood too close to the casket, the nauseatingly sweet smell almost made you faint. The mindless hum of Our Fathers, Hail Marys, and Glory Bes rose and sank, as we stood bunched around the pine box. I stared at the gray, wrinkled skin of the corpse, thinking, as usual, how sterile the death of a celibate was.

Early next morning we recited Matins and Lauds of the Office of the Dead, from a special booklet with black cardboard covers. I recall the rasping, phlegmy voice of the lector filling the chapel with the plaintive verses of the tenth chapter of Job. "*Manus tuae fecerunt me* . . . Thine hands have made me and fashioned me together round about; yet thou dost destroy me. Remember, I beseech thee, that thou hast made me as the clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again?" It seemed to be the voice of the dead man pleading with God.

The funeral mass, *pro vita defunctis* (for those who had finished the task of life), took place later that morning. It was a brief, starkly cold ceremony, with no one communicating, since we had already gone to mass. Now for the first time we saw the family of the deceased, ordinarily just a handful, their suits and dresses standing out from the ranks of black soutanes. After the final absolution the choir sang the wistful hymn, "In paradisum," which like all prayers for the dead made me wonder: the dead man was already light years away from us. Yet here we were, wishing him well, like a bon voyage party for someone who has reached his destination long ago. And what was the destination, anyhow, I mused, as we marched out to the cemetery.

At the back of the house we were met by the undertakers and the hearse. I hated that oily, soft-padding team of *croquemorts*. As an altar boy I had often served at funerals. I used to seize the coffin stand immediately after the recessional and wheel it to the vestibule of the church, to collect a grudging 25¢ or 50¢ ransom from the pallbearers. Even then I disliked the breed. But those beefy, redhaired Irishmen, with their tight collars and pinky rings were more tolerable than the

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varlets we employed at St. Andrew's. Their professional slickness scarcely concealed a monumental indifference that seemed to mock the dead. They led the way over the gravel paths of the cemetery to the gravesite, followed by a serpentine procession of candlebearing acolytes and the rest of the community. After a short service the coffin was lowered into the ground. Everyone dispersed, except for the work crew that stayed behind with Brother Zugan, the short, burly gravedigger, to shovel in the dirt. In the winter the service was held at the crypt, where bodies were stored till the spring thaw. As the officiant muttered the prayers, I read over the names of the benefactors and their children who were permanently entombed in the crypt. An appropriate house for the dead, with bronze doors, pale marble interior, and air that smelled a hundred years old. When the last Amen was said and the doors shut, the residue of depression would linger for hours.

Death came to St. Andrew's through the mail as well. All deaths of members of the New York and Buffalo provinces, numbering at that time around 1,600 men, were reported during reading at table. Just as all French soldiers die on the field of honor, all Jesuits died "piously in the Lord." *Pie in Domino requievit.* Passing the fathers' bulletin board on the second floor I always checked to see if there were any of the familiar black-bordered postcards from the provincial's office there. I once read in *Woodstock Letters*, a private Jesuit magazine, about an old priest whose head was turned by reading these notices. An extraordinary fear of death began to paralyze him, so that he stopped traveling outside the house or even, after a while, walking around inside it. Finally he imprisoned himself in his room, locked the windows, and pulled down the shades—until he died. Like an animal facing a predator, he thought he could escape if he stayed perfectly still. (The priest's delusion reminded me of one of my childhood fancies. Observing how the villains in all the Westerns staggered when they were shot and lunged for something to hold onto, only to fall down dead, I concluded that you could not die till you had slumped on the ground. So, should I ever be threatened by death, I would strap myself to a tree. As long as the belt or rope held out, I would be safe.)

In addition to the Jesuit obituaries we learned that relatives of community members had died through the request, read at supper, to "pray for the repose of the soul of the—(father, mother, etc.) of one of Ours of this house." The man himself was never named, since if he had not yet left for the funeral, he might be eating in the refectory with us. Once as I walked into the dormitory I saw out of the corner of my eye a good friend of mine in tears and leaning on the shoulder of another novice as they went downstairs. They were on their way to pack his suitcase for home: his father had just died.

All this was new to me. The only death I had ever really experienced till then was my grandfather's—the only death in the family in seventeen years. Now I had joined an immense, vulnerable family, full of old men. Of course, I seldom knew personally all the men whose deaths accumulated so quickly, but I still had a sense of loss. And I worried about my parents and brothers and sisters away in Brooklyn. It occurred to me that as time went on, the only important news I could expect would be bad. If the hospital called, it could not be to say "You have a son!" or "You have a daughter!" but only to inform me that someone had died.

I was little troubled in my novitiate days by the thought of my own death. Shortly before I entered I had shocked my mother by exclaiming one night that I would not mind dying there and then. In my Prince Myshkin phase death seemed easy. In the novitiate, cradled by blissful certitude, I sometimes fell asleep imagining that I was dropping into the arms of God and expiring. I had no difficulty writing the notes of condolence we had to send to every novice or junior who had lost a parent. "Dear Brother X, Pax Christi! I

was sorry to hear about the death of your mother. But just as your mother put on Christ's death in her baptism, so now by dying she shares in Christ's resurrection, etc." Such letters, assuming mine were typical, were delivered by the dozen to the seminarian, who passed them on to his family. By all accounts people were comforted by them, though I shudder to think how readily we served up pious formulas, one to another.

In the seminary for the first time death became a reality to me. I had just taken my first steps in religion, and the end was barely a dot on the horizon, but I could see figures of my future in the older Jesuits around me. Death began to lose its mystic aura and to take on a disturbing familiarity. In the philosophate I walked many times in black coat and biretta behind funeral processions to our hillside cemetery. (St. Andrew's was filling up, so all the houses in the province buried their dead here.) I had awakened by now from my "dogmatic slumber," and death haunted me. I wrote poetry about the ebbing of my simple faith. I read Unamuno and Pascal. "The last act is bloody, however fine all the rest of the play may be. They throw a little earth upon our head, and that is the end forever." I chewed on this on the way back to the house. My death, then, would not be a gentle release. I would

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not fall like a leaf onto the Ground of Being. I would have to leap naked into the dark.

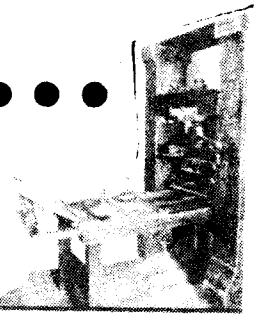
The more I thought about it, the more it confused and saddened me. In Psychology class we went over the traditional proofs for the immortality of the soul. The soul was simple, not composite. It had no parts to break down into, and hence was indestructible—unless God should choose to annihilate it. Of course, this presupposed that you had a soul, but you could demonstrate *that* by the act of knowledge. In most activities you could both do something and watch yourself doing it, but you could not simultaneously know something and know that you were knowing it. Because at the core of yourself was an irreducible subjective source, a principle of continuity, a cognitive Entity that with every judgment it made affirmed Being and our link with it. In other words, a soul. But the argument had a sting in its tail. The only trouble with the afterlife, said the professor, is that you can't imagine it.

But could you believe what you couldn't imagine? I had always believed in creation, because I couldn't conceive of an eternal universe. But what was more conceivable than eternal death? A blow to the head could snuff out my intellect for good, a sudden skid and a car crash could extinguish *me* for good. "A vapor, a drop of water suffices to kill him." And then? What could be more cumbersome or contradictory than the usual images of the afterlife? Thinking literally about it was the surest way to despair. My mind couldn't leap the gap from the withered bodies of the moribund priests I had known, or the shattered bodies of the war dead, or the billions of corpses rotting in the earth, to the Glorified Body of theology. And, though no scripture mentioned it, surely the spirit would have to be transformed as well as the flesh. Otherwise all the petty, banal, boring, stupid souls of the righteous would be immortalized. If no one deserved an eternity of torment in hell, did anyone deserve everlasting happiness?

My ideas were a muddle, but I had the will to believe, and I believed. The letters of condolence I wrote cost me more effort now. At funerals I fretted less about the bleakness of the liturgy and brooded instead over the finality of death. Still I held on. I meditated on the great consoling lines of the New Testament: ". . . unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone. But if it dies, it brings forth much fruit." "And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away." Dying was much harder than I had once thought; so was being a Christian. But better suffer growing pains than linger in childishness. Besides, I had no choice. The evidence on death was so massive that either I swallowed and digested or I choked on it.

THE BIG APPLE

PRESS



New York's fiscal crisis is roughly a year old now, but its effects on West 10th Street, where I live, are visible in only two ways: the garbage trucks make three pickups a week, instead of six, and the Jefferson Market branch of the public library, at the corner of 10th and Sixth Avenue, is closed whenever I want to use it. There is a schedule taped to the front door but it's as confusing as an airline timetable and I can never remember from one day to the next if it's closed on Wednesday or Thursday, and open till nine on Monday or Friday. When I guess, I always seem to guess wrong.

For the rest, things seem pretty much the same. P.S. 41 at 11th and Sixth is still open, of course, and so far as I know none of the kids has been run over crossing the street even though the school crossing guards were all fired. The street sweeper still comes around three or four times a week, Con Edison has not cut off power to the sodium arc street lamps, the potholes are no worse (if not better), the fire trucks clang by just as often, and when I walk the dog in the morning I pass the same two cops, drinking coffee in their car parked in front of the Church of the Ascension on Fifth Avenue. From what I can see, personally, the city's budget cutbacks have not made much difference. The dislocation has been so slight, in fact, that one wonders what all the hoorah was about in the first place.

The question, of course, is whether I can see what is actually happening from my front door. I suspect not. I suspect that things are eroding quickly, just out of sight. I suspect that the exodus of citizens and business is speeding up while the city is being allowed to run down. Perhaps a few layabouts have been dropped from the city payroll, as well, a few political hacks sent out to earn an honest living, a few tons of pointless paperwork lifted from the daily load. Perhaps. But I suspect that the hacks, the layabouts and the paperpushers are getting along fine, while the city is gradually dying, like a plant starved of sunlight.

The reason I only suspect these things without actually knowing one way or the other is that the press has made no coherent effort to tell me. The occasional story appears about the progress of financial malnutrition in this or that city agency, but there has been no major, sustained attempt to analyze the greatest economic and governmental crisis in the city's history. If that strikes you as an exaggeration, read Jason Epstein's excellent

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description of the city's troubles in the February 19 issue of *The New York Review of Books*. The city deserves but is not getting a serious public discussion of its decline. I am not faulting the reporters who have been covering the stories of the day, like Steve Weisman of the *Times* (recently transferred to Albany, like the city government itself, when you come to think of it). The fault is more properly that of their editors, whose minds have been on other things.

In the last month or two the *Times* has published a brilliant series on medical malpractice and incompetence, a solid series on the growth of the Sunbelt, and a worthy but interminable series on the (then) eleven candidates—or was it twelve? or thirteen?—running for the Democratic presidential nomination. Terry Sanford and Lloyd Bentsen are already gone, but I know more about them than I do about city services in Queens, or the workings of the Emergency Financial Control Board, or the ballooning maintenance costs of the subway system, or the city university. Parts of Queens must be as remote as Siberia by now; what will they be like after the city cuts *another* $800 million from its budget over the next three years?

The list of neglected questions could be extended indefinitely. Even after 25,000 employee cuts there are still 270,000 or 280,000 people working for the city. I don't know what they do, and I don't know anyone who does know. We all know the city is "in trouble," and we all know the city is going to have to "tighten its belt" and "bite the bullet," but knowing that is knowing too little. The heart of the problem is this: the city's $1 billion deficit ($200 million down, $800 yet to go) must be reduced to zero by 1978. If the deficit is not removed the city eventually will default, very likely pulling the state down with it. Contrary to the hopes of those who consider the repudiation of debts a form of instant socialism, a city-state default will have very unpleasant, not to say catastrophic effects. Mayor Beame says not to worry; he is going to balance the budget by reducing the city agencies across the board. Ten per cent less pencils, ten per cent less prison guards, whatever it takes. In fact it is far more likely the EFCB will make its cuts selectively. By this I mean that some city services are going to be cut 100 per cent. What I would like to know is which ones are really useless, and which vital? The reason I want to know is that I suspect the EFCB, left to itself, will make its decisions politically, just as the city always has, and thus end by cutting truly vital services in order to protect police wash-up time, the 4 o'clock summer quitting hour, and retirement on half-pay after 20 years for bus dispatchers.

It is not only the local papers which have neglected this matter of what we need, and what we don't, but the magazines as well. The most important are the *Village Voice* and *New York*, step-siblings which have begun to look and especially to sound like each other. That is, excited and rich and vaguely, well . . . *concerned*. The *Voice* has done a better job of covering the city's troubles than *New York*, which is perhaps natural since it is, after all, a weekly *news*paper printed on *news*print and therefore properly concerned with *news*. There seems to be a *Voice* policy of one city story a week and some of them have been first-rate—Deborah Davis on the Sanitation Department (February 2), Henry Stern on free tuition at CUNY (January 12), Jack Newfield on the 25 worst political hacks on the city payroll and Phil Tracy on Victor Gotbaum (both December 8). Too many of the *Voice* stories, however, suffer from brevity (often a page or less, with a lot of the page given to photographs and big headlines), and from a narrow focus on personalities. The old journalism, you will remember, was based on the five Ws—who, what, when, where and why? The new journalism—not the Tom Wolfe sort, but the *Voice-New York* sort—has only three Ws: Who is doing What to Whom? It's interesting, and sometimes it's to the point, but mostly it neglects the details for the melodrama. Ask yourself: is Richard Reeves ever going to tell you anything about the SALT talks? the IMF? tariffs? Algerian natural gas? No, no, no, and no. Is he going to say anything about Nixon's trip to China, Kissinger's resignation, Reagan's hollow promises, Ford's hollow performance? Yes, yes, yes, and yes. It's a question of temperament, and the *Voice-New York* temperament is lively and personal, rather than general and . . . alas . . . dull.

New York is like the *Voice* where the city is concerned, only more so. Ken Auletta published a fine piece on the "The 20 Critical Decisions that Broke New York City" (October 27) but most of *New York's* New York coverage has been in the three Ws category. It wants everybody to have a marvelous time, but it won't stick to the point. It'll tell you where to buy potted plants or brass beds, and what it costs to play tennis on Saturday morning, and how tall Robert Redford is, or isn't, and what the Paleys would like to do to Truman Capote, after what Truman Capote did to the Paleys, all of which is interesting, after its fashion, but none of which helps *New York* readers to understand what the EFCB is up to, and why. I share *New York's* conviction that New York is the world's best place to live—where every day is a sweet discovery—but I wish the magazine would pay stricter attention to the mechanics of the city, since it is, after all, breaking down.

The only other magazine which might be expected to take a serious, sustained interest in the city is *The New Yorker* (yes, *The New Yorker*) and in fact it has published at least a dozen "Around City Hall" columns by Andy Logan during the last year. These fall into a strange *New Yorker* genre, like Richard Rovere's "Letter from Washington" and Elizabeth Drew's "Washington Journal" during the Watergate hoorah. What Ms. Logan does is to read the newspapers. *All* the news-

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papers. After she has read the newspapers she tells us what was *in* the newspapers. It would be the work of ten years and a Ph.D. thesis to find out if Ms. Logan has ever printed a quote or a fact which had not previously appeared in the newspapers. Maybe she has, but that isn't the way her column reads.

You may well wonder why she does this? After all, most of her New York readers read the newspapers all by themselves, and her out-of-town readers probably do not care what was in the New York papers. Of course LaGuardia once read the funny papers over the radio, but that was because the funny papers were otherwise unobtainable. Like so much in *The New Yorker,* the purpose of "Around City Hall" must remain a mystery. It relates in detail (and, it must be admitted, in wry, sometimes arch, but always precision-tooled prose) what public figures have been doing in public. If they made a speech, or a remark in passing to a reporter, or cut the ribbon at a building site, or issued a denial of this or that charge, or shook hands outside a Congressional committee room, or quoted Thomas Paine in a speech, it is all there. The trouble with this is that most of what public figures *really* do is done in private. Ms. Logan might have used her monthly three or four thousand words to find out what was behind Mayor Beame's trip to Washington, or Governor Carey's State of the State message. She might have investigated things, like a reporter, rather than listed them, like an archivist, but she has chosen instead to stick to the record. She makes all those governmental comings and goings sound silly and futile, and of course sometimes they are silly and futile. But to make the same point in the same way, column after column, year after year, is to decline from the sardonic to the smug.

The only aspects of New York's fiscal crisis which have been thoroughly explored in print so far are the precise way the city ran up its debts in the first place, and the reasons the bankers finally said no. (See especially, Steve Weisman in the *New York Times Magazine* of last August 17, "How New York Became a Fiscal Junkie"; W. Robertson in *Fortune* for last August, "Going Broke the New York Way"; and M. J. Rossant in the *Harper's* for January, "How Rockefeller Destroyed New York." In the last it is only the title, and not the article, which blames it all on Rockefeller.) The rest of the city's troubles have been neglected. The aspect of New York's fiscal crisis which demands attention is what the money was spent on, and whether or not it was wasted. What, exactly, did New York get for its $6 billion in accumulated short-term debt? The city university, for example, has increased its budget since 1950 from $27.7 million to more than $600 million. Its 280,000 students are almost certainly going to be asked to pay tuition, but perhaps it would be better to junk all the courses on transcendental meditation, house officials in less palatial quarters, cut back marginal programs, reduce paperwork, fire some faculty and staff, and let students go to school for free. CUNY, after all, is one of the genuine benefits the city offers its middle-class residents. Open admissions and free tuition provide benefits where they are needed the most, and yet the city is getting ready to penalize the poor and the disadvantaged for the benefit of . . . who? I don't know who; that is precisely my point. No one has been taking the matter seriously, or at least not in the public prints.

Questions of a similar sort ought to be raised and answered about other expensive city programs. Some of them may be awkward or painful. Most New York journalists, and journals, would not like to conclude that rent control ought to go, that perhaps a union or two ought to be busted (before the city is busted), that maybe the city ought not to solicit the poor with welfare, while driving away business with taxes. I suspect that it is fear of just such conclusions which gives so much writing about New York a tone of nervous ill-temper. But it is senseless to shy away from such questions because we don't know where they are going to come out, at the cost of surrendering all decisions on who gets what to the EFCB.

I suspect that I must sound a bit of a nut on this subject, perhaps even as passionately vague as the woman who prompted Freud to cry out, "Woman! Dear God, what does she want? What does she want?" What I want is that some publication should make a sustained effort to find out what has gone wrong in New York City. The *Times* hires pollsters to find out what New Hampshire housewives think of detente; why don't they hire the Rand Corporation to find out where the city's money is going? Why doesn't the *Voice* have as many city specialists as it does movie reviewers? Why can't *The New Yorker* devote as much space and meticulous attention to New York as it does to the survival of the bark canoe?

New York is filled with writers and editors who love the city, and care about its people, but they are treating the budget crisis as if it were quantum mechanics, too hard and complex for their simple little heads to get straight. We have heard plenty about Beame and Carey and Elish and Simon, and we are going to hear a lot more when next year's mayoral race gets underway, but when are we going to hear about the *money*? The budget is not published in Greek. The deliberations of the EFCB are not conducted in Latin. The budget cuts are plain arithmetic, not Boolean algebra. New Yorkers would read a serious and systematic attempt to explain where their money went in the past, and where it ought to go in the future. They care what is happening, and are willing to listen to the details, but the press is treating them a bit like children, slow to take notice and quick to get bored. In the meantime the hard decisions are being made elsewhere, out of sight.

THOMAS POWERS

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THE SCREEN

When Sidney Furie's *Gable and Lombard* begins with a match dissolve from the real Gable and Lombard to James Brolin and Jill Clayburgh, the actors who play the title roles, the film is almost all over right then and there. Whoever played Gable and Lombard are bound to suffer by comparison, of course, but this ill-advised optical effect makes them do so before they have even had a fighting chance to act in the roles. The very look of Brolin and Clayburgh is wrong. It's as if, once the real Gable and Lombard have faded out, no new image fades in. In physical terms alone, neither Brolin nor Clayburgh is equal to the role. Where Gable was broad-faced and thick-chested—a "he-man," as the phrase that seems invented for him has it—Brolin is narrower and slighter. The imposing, padded clothes of the thirties that Gable filled out so handsomely look somewhat baggy and excessive on Brolin.

Likewise, Clayburgh simply hasn't the presence to be Lombard. From her high forehead and arching eyebrows to her suggestively meaty hips and legs, Lombard gave the impression of being a match for any situation she got into, or any man. For all her energy, Clayburgh looks slightly crumpled much of the time. Where Lombard was wacky, Clayburgh is just wacked out. Where Lombard was sensuous, Clayburgh is merely slinky. A good deal of this film is shot in sunlit interiors which are lavish, thirty-ish, beautiful and, somehow, all wrong. The paint on the walls is always the flat, latex-base variety that we use today to give the three-eighths inch wallboard from which houses are now made a little texture. In the thirties the paints were shinier and thinner, but the walls were more solid. As Gable and Lombard, Brolin and Clayburgh miss in much the same way.

Their inappropriateness lies in the general ways that the physical types of the seventies differ from those of the thirties. The specific ways that Clayburgh or Brolin resemble the people they are playing are not the crucial issue. Still, that issue *is* of interest because only one of the two, Brolin, seems to have been cast for his close resemblance to the person he portrays. This is interesting because it suggests the filmmakers assume that Lombard is less memorable than Gable—that we don't have her face in mind any more firmly enough to need a lookalike as we do for Gable. The reason no doubt is *Gone with the Wind*, whose enormous popularity and frequent revivals have fixed Gable's face in our consciousness like no others except, maybe, those of the presidents on small-denomination bills. This fact only makes it all the more ironical that it is Lombard that *Gable and Lombard* is really about. The film was originally to be entitled *Lombard and Gable*, and she deserved that top billing too, for it is her personality, not Gable's, that still has currency enough to be worth making a movie about.

What makes the real Carole Lombard as marketable a figure today as her screen image was in the thirties is the way her private life splatters a bit of raunchiness on her public glamour. She was what every woman in this liberated era would like to be, and what every man would like to have: a woman who is, beneath a beautiful, composed and successful exterior, a real brawler—a woman whose charm, elegance and ambition when she's on the town are exceeded only by her ability to enjoy herself when she's in bed. Besides being one of the most popular stars in Hollywood's heyday, Lombard was one of the shrewdest businesswomen, negotiating for herself more lucrative, flexible contracts than anyone else, including Gable. But she was also known to insiders as one of the most extroverted and brassy females in tinsel town.

Gable and Lombard doesn't go so far as to show us how she seduced Frederic March while wearing a huge rubber dildo which, she guessed rightly, would send him fleeing in panic when he discovered it under her dress. On the other hand, this film does detail at some length, and for every laugh that can be wrung out of it, the time Lombard had a mitten knitted for Gable's "best part." Authentic little details like this are, along with Lombard's foul-mouthing, very much the point of *Gable and Lombard*. Not until the seventies has moviemaking caught up with the "real" Carole Lombard—now it can be told!—whose personality this film portrays in a hundred uncensored but trivial ways.

The effect of this emphasis, curiously, is to clean up the Gable-Lombard story, to remove any unseemliness from it. While striving for absolute verisimilitude in some things, the filmmakers freely omit or fictionalize others. Gone are all but one of both Gable's and Lombard's previous marriages. Gone are the bitter jealousies and suspicions of infidelity that sometimes flared up between them. Gone are Gable's stinginess and Lombard's extravagance, her promiscuity and his exploitation of women, her blind jingoism and his unmanly reluctance to join the armed services. The motive for avoiding such sullied realities is that Furie has wanted to make of Gable and Lombard's life together pretty much the same sort of film they themselves were often in: a screwball comedy.

Gable and Lombard is a passable one, too, a picture that probably would have paid its way on some double bill back in the thirties. But back in the thirties, Gable's own really great comedies—*It Happened One Night* or *Wife vs. Secretary*—and Lombard's—*Twentieth Century, Nothing Sacred* or *My Man Godfrey*—were made with so much less strain, hoopla and money. It hardly seems worth the effort to have done a big, expensive and only mildly entertaining film like this today.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

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THE ROMAN-a-THIEF

STEPHEN DARST

How a young man lost his virtue and found a novel

"The first thing you'll probably want to know is whether I write on the typewriter or do I use a pencil or a quill pen and how many hours a day do I write and all that David Eisenhower kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into that.

"I told my publisher I'd talk to you about the book, the novel, give you maybe a little bit of the plot, tell you a little about my ideas on writing and answer any intelligent questions.

"To tell you God's truth the way I got a publisher for the novel was I just sent it in over the transom, as they say in the publishing business. No agent, no advance word, nothing.

"And, of course, knowing some of our crowd, after that manuscript came in over the transom the publisher was expecting to see five or six Cubans piling in after it, bristling with guns, bugging equipment, phone taps. I've gotten to know all the editors at Enoch Bigelow and Company pretty well by now and we've had a few laughs about it, but believe me at first they didn't know what to expect.

"Those editors couldn't have been nicer through all of this. I'm not kidding myself. I know that right now I'm not one of the Big Talents. I've still got a long way to go before anyone puts me in the same league with Spiro Agnew or John Dean. But I think I've shown some promise. My editor told me they haven't been as excited about a young writer for years. Hell, they know I've seen it all, done it all. I know what it feels like in your gut to be assistant undersecretary of commerce, and, of course, that's the thing that I've got to get down on paper so that the reader can feel it in the pit of his stomach—how the weather was, so to speak, in the halls of the Commerce Department.

"And how the weather was at the campaign committee. Even more of that. I think I'm catching on quickly. I suppose the line between good perjury and good fiction is thinner than any of us imagined. If you have a story a grand jury will buy, you probably have a story the average reader will buy. It seems funny now but the thing we were sweating out for a while was that I might have told my story too well—that the grand jury would go on believing me and refuse to indict. When they hand down that indictment it can seem like the end of the world but I realize now that they handed me a lot more than an indictment—they gave me a bonanza really. Because no indictment, no big advance, no movie sale, no paperback, no four-figure lecture fees.

"On the other hand if they had put me away for six, ten years, that's no good either. Six, ten years from now who wants the confessions, fiction or nonfiction, of an ex-assistant undersecretary of commerce? I happen to like the way I write, I mean I think that my sentences have a cadence that is entirely me, but I guess I'd have to agree that the most important thing about my sentences is that they are concurrent. Hell, if they had run consecutively I would have been in the slammer for 56 years—the copyright would have run out on my book by then.

"So the way it worked out was ideal —a lot of light sentences to run concurrently. The plot is important, of course, ditto the characterization, the setting, the theme. You can't overlook any of these. But you could say with some justification that the sentences are still the thing. The reader remembers me, hat over face in the dock taking the sentences, ducking the television cameras, the whole marvelous mystique of it.

"I was a little down at first, as you might expect, wondering whether there was a God and if so just what kind of Republican He was. I prayed a lot, I can tell you that, although I've never been what you'd call a praying man. Although, I guess deep down we're all religious. I found that I was praying all the time, praying and trying to understand what had happened to me, to all of us. The break-ins, the buggings, the phone taps. Until it occurred to me one day that God breaks in on each and every one of us every day of our lives and you might say he has us bugged from the day we are born until the day we die. When I thought of that it gave me some comfort.

"But I didn't really pull out of it until my editor said to me, 'George, don't you realize that your dishonor as a public servant is your glory as a writer? You have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to turn perjury into literature with a never-to-be-forgotten corking good yarn, a tale of malfeasance, misfeasance and nonfeasance, set in a romantic locale.'

"After he said that I went to work with a will. Not that there weren't distractions. They claim prison is a great place to write and I guess it must be but only in a real prison. In a real prison you can't get out, of course, but other people can't get in at you either. This wasn't prison, this was the Johnstown Minimum Security Detention Farm and while there were no walls, only a low fence that couldn't really keep you in if you wanted out, that low fence worked both ways. I mean there was a network television crew jumping that fence every five minutes, coming in to interview me. For the first month I was there I

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thought Mike Wallace was a trusty.

"The first thing I did when I finally got down to the writing was to change the names in order to protect the not-as-yet-convicted. Then the titles of office holders—for example, if a character was Secretary of the Interior in real life, in the novel I make him Secretary of Transportation. The Democrats all become Republicans and the Republicans become Democrats. Communists remain Communists, of course.

"The setting is perfect. Washington! That's where the action is and I've got it all down in *Lead Us Not*. You know what they're calling this kind of novel at the bar, at Elaine's? The kind Spiro is writing and I'm writing? A roman a thief—everyone is excited as hell about it. It's the first new development in the novel form in years.

"One of the things that excited my publisher most is that this isn't a typical first novel, not a war novel or a young-man-loses-himself-at-Choate-but-finds-himself-later-at-Princeton novel. To begin with, the first words are a grabber, if I do say so: 'All happy campaigns are alike. Each unhappy campaign is unhappy in its own way, and so the campaign in 1972 can be said to have been . . .'

"And so on. I think I can give you a little of the plot. To begin with it introduces the reader to a whole new set of characters never before presented in American literature, much the way Twain introduced readers to the men on the Mississippi. There's this group of highly-principled, idealistic young road contractors, guys who grew up together, went to all the wrong schools together—wrong schools, wrong dances, married the wrong girls, although they didn't know any of this until later when they tried to land the big road jobs and found themselves out in the cold while the old epicene, elitist road contractors took all the cushy jobs.

"Anyway the idealistic young road contractors talk things over. One young contractor asks whether in an imperfect world like this, can there be perfect road contractors? The young contractors have met a romantic young ward heeler who has become their friend and he asks the same question: In an imperfect world can there be perfect ward heelers? They all agree—it's the big scene of the novel with blood oaths and all—that they will never compromise their principles. Instead, they will send their principles away for a few years while they get theirs. Later, they will send for their principles to rejoin them, to live happily together ever after. In the last scene the Governor—it's years later now and the ward heeler has been elected Governor—the Governor walks at twilight down the new highway, the whole scene symbolizing the highway of life and man's journey down that—I should have said first that the concrete is already cracking a bit on the highway because of sub-standard materials—imperfect highway.

"That's just the outline. And the outline and that one chapter are all I've done, but it was good enough to fetch an advance of one hundred thousand big ones from Enoch Bigelow. Naturally, though, for that kind of dough they want you to produce. So I'm producing, making good progress. I'll tell you a few things I've discovered about writing. I don't mind passing on a few tips—hell, I've learned a lot from reading how other writers do it. For example, Hemingway said that he composed all his dialogue on the typewriter because a typewriter sounds like someone talking. I checked that out and it's true, but I can go old Hemingway one better. I found out that an IBM typewriter sounds like a Republican while a Democrat sounds like an Underwood standard. Don't ask me why, I'm just telling you what I know. Independents sound like Smith-Corona portables, by the way. So I write my dialogue that way, a line of IBM, a line of Underwood standard and a few lines of Smith-Corona. And it sings.

"I know you guys are interested in tricks like that, helpful things for other writers, but the fact is that tricks don't matter so much in the end. They help a little but the main thing is you have to have a story worth telling and you have to put your faith in Jesus. I'd walk over my grandmother for Jesus."

BOOKS

THE CHURCH OF J. F. POWERS

ELEANOR B. WYMARD

Look How the Fish Live

J. F. POWERS

Knopf, $6.96

J. F. Powers has written thirty-nine stories and one novel, *Morte D'Urban* (National Book Award, 1963), since 1943, a banner year when he published not only "Lions, Harts, Leaping Does," the story which brought him national recognition, but also three little known didactic narratives in *The Catholic Worker*. In the latter, as an angry young man, Powers oversimplifies the complex relationship between belief and literature with the blatant statement, "the upholstery of Christianity has held up better than the idea and practice."

Although never again so obviously stated, this germinal concept goads Powers' mature writing with compelling purpose, revealing the central unity and vital spirit of his creativity. In *Look How the Fish Live* (Knopf, 1975), Powers continues to expose the

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"upholstery of Christianity" to real light, as he tries, with edgy patience, to make some sense out of a condition that is, indeed, very human.

To gain some sense of Powers' vision in this new collection, it is important to consider the original dates of publication of some of the pivotal short stories, especially in relationship to Vatican II. The structural arrangement of these ten pieces—seven short stories, a three-act practical joke, and "two cautionary tales"—also reveals Powers' judgment that religious values in America need to be deepened and revitalized.

"The Keystone" (1963), coinciding with Vatican II, directly protests that the time has waned for good-humored tolerance of an inflexible ecclesiastical organization, for Powers is clearly critical of the institutional Church. Certainly the building of a cathedral—minus the keystone of the arches—is the central symbol of the story, but the real issue is the very nature of the monstrosity. The horror of Bishop Dullinger's dream to build a cathedral in the twentieth century city of man lies in the ignorance shared by the hierarchy, architects, contractors, and laborers who do not recognize that they are compromising the uniqueness of their own worship by camouflaging the fresh forms of today under the manufactured guises of another age. The artificiality of the Cathedral of Ostergothenburg is a metaphor for a Church that mimics a medieval culture but fails to respond to the challenge that new stones be carved for today.

As the day for the dedication of the new cathedral approaches, Bishop Dullinger, realizing his subserviency to the newly appointed chancellor, Father Gau, removes from his wall a dusty chart outlining the hierarchical structure of the diocese:

> . . . bishop at the top of the tree, vicar-general below him, then chancellor, and then to the right, on the right branch, clergy in general, and to the left, on the left branch, sisters or religious, as they were designated on the chart, and finally, down the middle, on the trunk of the tree, the laity. . . . When he had the chart down, he carried it around for awhile . . . [then] he rolled it up gently, and put it in the trunk of the car with the little model of the new cathedral.

The tension of "The Keystone," however, is not simply the conflict between Bishop Dullinger and Monsignor Gau. The essential issue of the story involves the price the Church has paid for existing within a tight system of structured promotions which brew internal dissension and power struggles. At one time, for example, Bishop Dullinger had "given some thought to building the cathedral out of fieldstones . . . just as they came from the hand of God and were collected by farmers from their fields. . . . Monsignor Gau . . . had more or less discouraged the idea. . . ."

The missing keystone in the arches of the new cathedral is, then, the central symbol of the story: "In the middle of every arch there were *two* stones; *Where the keystone should have been there was just a crack.*" The archetypal symbol from 1 Peter, 2:4-8, refers to Christ as the keystone among the "living stones," that is, all life, the good and evil of reality. But the keystone is missing in the new cathedral because it is a hybrid form, proposed, designed, and executed by those ignorant of Christ's message to make all things new in him.

In "The Keystone" Powers is concerned that a Church which neglects the cultivation of aesthetic and intellectual excellence, neglects, too, the pursuit and expression of truth. Bishop Dullinger's scrapping of the diocesan hierarchial chart is not the act of a man with insight, but the gesture of one who feels useless and lonely because he no longer has need to examine his conscience daily according to "Good Rules for Businessmen."

In May, 1963, the publication date of "The Keystone," Vatican II was already underway. Twenty years before that, however, J. F. Powers was a prophet of that Council, for his concern has always been with the eccentricities of a Church turned inward. The tonal theme of "The Keystone" expresses the fear that the Church faces the curious danger of becoming an empty Gothic shell unless it tries to relate Revelation more meaningfully to the problems of contemporary life.

What does Vatican II mean then to the art and theme of Powers? The clerical stories in *Look How the Fish Live* are a scathing indictment that the Church has simply changed its upholstery. Simpson, the newly ordained curate in "One of Them" (1975), "stopped looking for the action, and sometimes settled down [to read] *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion: With Special Reference to the XVII and XVIII Centuries,* by Monsignor Knox (a convert), and shook his head at the hysteria in the Church then, as he did at the hysteria in the Church now, thinking, *Plus ça change* the more it's the same. . . ." But Simpson is no visionary: his idea of action is to canvass the office and boiler room in search, not of mystery, but of answer—in this case, the literal key to the door of the parish house.

Although Powers' rectory is basically unchanged since Vatican II, the atmosphere, however, is noticeably charged:

> Women were now allowed to take up the collection at Holy Sepulchre, and strobe lights had been ordered for the sanctuary . . . and Potter and his pastor . . . were hoping to get Holy Sepulchre changed to Holy Resting Place as less off-putting to the churchless.

According to Powers, the clergy, despite hopes and promises, are not yet confronting the awesome mystery of salvation, for they still reduce the pain of living to the superficial grievances of the rectory. In the case of the newly ordained, Incarnation, Redemption, and Resurrection are communicated by vestibule posters screaming LOVE, PEACE, and JOY. Although the vocabulary has changed, Powers' clergy are still absorbed in trivia. The Bishop of Ostergothenburg, only in his retirement, lives to bring "good news."

The inhumanity of the rectory is

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painful: pastors live for days without knowing a curate's name, and stay forever in their bedrooms at the head of the stairs, sealed off from the problems of the microcosmic parish. Powers hits directly at their celibacy as the reason for their alienation and loneliness. In search of "Priestly Fellowship" (1969), Father Joe encouraged Bill, his new assistant, to invite some seminary friends for a Sunday night buffet, but one of them is Conklin, a seminary drop-out. When conversation turns to celibacy, Joe, with unwitting smugness, says, "And when you consider we work at it [celibacy] full time, unlike the laity—well, it makes you wonder, doesn't it?"

The irony of Conklin's response, "It did me," is lost on Bill. Implied in Powers' title, "Priestly Fellowship," is an exposé of the Church as human organization in juxtaposition to the Church as Mystical Body, the ideal brotherhood of all men united in the fatherhood of God. Such understatement, Powers would claim, makes for "stronger beer." To say that Powers sees no hope in the institutional Catholic Church is not to assert that he sacrifices faith in the Word. By exposing the frailty of the Church's human ways, Powers urges a necessary return to the essential Christian mysteries, blinded by mores, rubrics, and now, by strobe lights.

Placed first in the collection, the title story, "Look How the Fish Live" (1957), is a religious fable expressing the basic tenet of Powers' theme. Although the narrative action is slight, the plot is complex because it brings new awareness to the protagonist, an unnamed father of a family brood living in a rambling frame house surrounded by a yard which is "four city lots and full of trees, a small forest and game preserve in the old part of town." The father has never been "soft" toward the small animals who live in the yard, but on this particular day he ruminates about the "balance of nature" when he returns home to find his children trying to nurse a forgotten baby dove, while the mother dove sits "unconcerned" in a tree and soon flies away. After the bird is killed by a cat and the father buries it, Mr. and Mrs. Hahn, neighbors, stroll by and comment on the effectiveness of an insecticide for mosquitoes. The protagonist interrupts:

> "I'm sick of it all. . . . Insects, birds, and animals of all kinds. . . . Nature."
>
> Mr. Hahn smiled. "There'd be too many of those doves if things like that didn't happen. . . . Look how the fish live."
>
> He looked at the man with interest. This was the most remarkable thing Mr. Hahn had ever said in his presence. But of course Mr. Hahn didn't appreciate the implications.

Violence is potentially unchained when Mr. Hahn wants to kill the cat that killed the bird. When the father persists, "I'm sick of it all . . . children . . . women . . . and men," Mr. Hahn exclaims, "That doesn't leave much, does it?" The father ponders quietly, however:

> Who was left? God. It wasn't surprising, for all problems were at bottom theological. He'd like to put a few questions to God. God, though, knowing his thoughts, knew his questions, and the world was already in possession of all the answers that would be forthcoming from God. . . . A man had to accept his God-given limitations.

Powers seeks to reveal truth as it exists in the created order of things: his task is not to impose new order, but to explore pattern and design as they are subject to a higher perspective. When the father of "Look How the Fish Live" realizes his own imposition of an order upon existence, he concludes that neither can he be passive. So he plants a headstone on the grave of the dove and hopes that the cat may someday trip; after all, it *is* the nature of the cat to pursue the bird. As an artist, then, Powers is not in the Joycean tradition, a priest of the imagination creating his own independent order; instead, he traces the order of life to God. The role of Powers, as man and artist, is to discover and interpret that order, occasionally stubbing his toe and shouting angrily at enigmas he cannot understand, simply because it is the nature of human beings to behave so.

Look How the Fish Live begins and ends with stories of family life. In the last one, "Tinkers" (1975), the unnamed father, "America's thriftiest living author," is living in Ireland with his wife and seven children. Guilty and tense because "he could not provide his loved ones with a lasting home," the writer-father, not getting on with a play he wants to write about a "family of campers, possibly Germans . . . who make the mistake of pulling into a bivouac of tinkers for the night," roams the streets of Dublin collecting snatches of dialogue and buying small surprises for his children. One afternoon he buys an antique ship's lamp for "over the front door of the house they might have in America someday." As the tension in the household builds between husband and wife, father and children, a current of sympathy paradoxically binds them together, a spirit unknown in the many loveless parish houses.

Although Powers has been attacked and defended for his attitudes toward the Roman Catholic priest, the spiritual orientation of his fiction neither rises nor falls on his portrayal of the inner sanctum of the rectory. It provides simply an external structure for his pursuing the deeper problem that our generation is condemning itself to unfulfillment by ceasing to search for Mystery and Truth. The unnamed father is the spokesman for Powers' repeated theme that, although the order of life is inscrutable, man, by using

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his uniquely human powers, can question his existence and thereby come to a realization of, not only his finitude, but also his freedom. For Powers, the ironies, perplexities, and paradoxes of the human situation ultimately seem to make some sense and achieve some order only if viewed from a vantage point that embraces eternity. "Who was left? God."

Cesar Chavez: Autobiography of La Causa

JACQUES E. LEVY

Norton, $12.95

Chavez and the Farm Workers

RONALD B. TAYLOR

Beacon, $10

TODD GITLIN

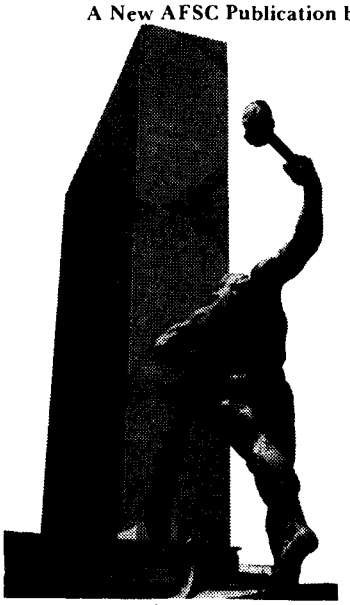
Ever since "Pastures of Plenty" and *The Grapes of Wrath*, it has been hard for writers to avoid mystique when they think of farm workers. The hope for a union of the most exploited has animated generations of liberals and radicals, especially organizers, and for the last ten years the United Farm Workers under Cesar Chavez have been, deservedly, a *cause célèbre* in the true and usually neglected sense of the term. Here is a union that celebrates religion and ethnicity, waves a distinct flag, consorts with political radicalism, and pushes its middle-class allies into active support. The UFW commands a political symbolism *and a continuity* no other insurgent organization in America can claim: all the more remarkable in a time when organizations are virtually moribund by the time they are discovered by the mass media. A trade union, a mass movement of the underclass, and an ethnic revitalization all at once, the UFW unites the gripping symbolisms of the Thirties and the Sixties, and gives us a hero: Cesar Chavez. And since the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., Cesar Chavez is the major exponent of nonviolence in American life: nonviolence in action, as Gandhi meant it, that is, not the nonviolence of the lecture hall and the coffee table.

Yet writing about Chavez has tended to center on his mythic qualities, leaving readers to wonder how the UFW was built, and built tough enough to survive—though damaged—years of Teamster raids and agribusiness despotism. (As I write, there are reports of vigilante violence against UFW organizers in the fields, and arrests, though the recent election law is supposed to have guaranteed free elections and open campaigning.) How does a dream become an insurgency, and an insurgency become a living organization? Two new books by California journalists are enlightening.

What Jacques Levy has done is to record hours and hours of Cesar Chavez' recollections over five years, to organize it—along with material from Chavez' speeches—in life sequence, and to present, in counterpoint, the voices of others who have loomed large in Chavez' life and in the life of the union: relatives, organizers, the negotiator Msgr. George Higgins, the AFL-CIO liaison William Kircher, a liberal "grower," the president of the California farm bureau, Governor Jerry Brown. So the book has the authenticity and authority of Chavez' voice, and the illuminating context that situates his struggle in the whole of society. The result is grand political literature in the tradition of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, though less intimate, less confessional—perhaps there is less to confess—and more concerned with the rarely described stuff of organizing. In Chavez' account, and in those of Richard Chavez and Fred Ross (who "found" Cesar in a San Jose barrio in 1952) there are discussions of the actual texture and process of organizing, the mistakes as well as the successes, the chaos as well as the purposes, from Chavez' first door-to-door activities to the secret ballot law passed this last May. As the account goes on there is less and less of Chavez the man with a personal history, and more and more

THE UNITED NATIONS AND HUMAN SURVIVAL

A New AFSC Publication by Henry C. Beerits, former chairman, AFSC Board



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James P. Brown, member editorial board New York Times

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of the union and its battles. It is a dramatic metamorphosis to trace: from "I" to "we."

The first hundred pages, farm worker's Chavez growing up, testify very powerfully to the struggle to grow up "between the dirt and the sky." The force of oppression is as burdensome as the force of resistance is luminous. In Chavez' account the struggle to survive passes naturally into the struggles to organize. A reader can get a sense of the way an organizer comes to think, weigh, decide, change his mind, look, see—and overlook. And one is also taken by Chavez as a brilliant leader and fallible tactician, above all a man irrepressible in his moral authority, a man able to say of any defeat, "this may be a blessing in disguise"—and to build a radically democratic union infused with that spirit. By embedding political strategy and tactics in his autobiography, by bringing it—apt metaphor—down to earth, this book becomes a major argument for nonviolent social movement, probably the most persuasive one we have.

The book is, unfortunately, flawed. Although it is well organized, it goes on too long and in too much detail; there is a fetish of authenticity. Much of its information about specific struggles, specific conversations, belongs in a labor history archive for scholars, not in a book that should get a wide popular leadership. The excitement of the story, especially as the Teamsters join the growers against the Chavistas (and there is good circumstantial evidence, at least, of Nixon's intervention on the side of the Teamsters, probably in return for their support in 1972), does not need to be dribbled away in verbosity. Devoted readers will not let it.

Ronald B. Taylor's book is also thick with information (Taylor has covered the UFW for the *Fresno Bee* from the beginning) but it is undermined by journalistic convention. Taylor is passionately committed to the UFW, he has interviewed the principals, and he covers the organizational history thoroughly, including clashes in the leadership and the troubles with the AFL-CIO. He clarifies some of the points of conflict between UFW and Teamsters, UFW and agribusiness, and also collates quite a lot of evidence of the Teamsters' involvement with the Nixon White House and with agribusiness. He does a service to labor history by resurrecting the story of some of the earlier, suppressed organizing efforts, especially the 1933 cotton strike, when deputized farmers opened fire on strikers in Pixley and killed two of them. And Taylor is able to withstand Chavez' enormous magnetism enough to criticize his failings as a leader.

But Taylor too often writes vaguely ("he equates the movement he leads with some kind of agarian social reform") and in cliché (unelaborated phrases like "mysticism of Mexico"). The book is quite disorganized; it sprawls; it is glutted with facts without interpretation (we learn which staff members did what in specific campaigns, but not the political-economic meaning of the agribusiness-Teamster alliance); and it is riddled with melodramatic meanwhile-back-at-the-ranch writing. And more: the irony is that, for all Taylor's sympathies and his experience, *Chavez and the Farm Workers* treats "the farm workers" as objects, oddly parallel to the "growers" concern for productivity and productivity alone. Not much is said about the lives of farm workers as they experience them, nor about rank-and-file feelings about the union and from the image of farm worker as exploited object to the farm worker as an abstract militant object is not a great enough distance. Nor is there much, in either book, about the agribusiness and political-economic forces —especially the push of technological innovation—that in the long run will force the fate of farm workers. Nor about the relations of rural and urban Chicanos, nor the actual or potential relations of the UFW to other insurgent forces in America. The analysis of insurgency requires that victims be seen *both* as suffering, resisting persons *and* as objects of vast impersonal forces. The future of farm workers will be produced not only at UFW headquarters but in the vast valley fields, in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Sacramento, New York, Washington . . . in banks and boardrooms. When this is more clearly understood, partisan journalism will produce more illuminating books still.

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DOUBLEDAY

Hegel on Reason and History

GEORGE DENNIS O'BRIEN

U. of Chicago Press, $8.50

JOHN E. SMITH

The continuing enigma of Hegel is that while all, friends and foes alike, acknowledge the enormous extent of his influence on Western civilization, everyone complains that his thought is almost impossible to understand. Perhaps Hegel himself had some inkling of this outcome when he declared in a not particularly self-effacing moment, "The great man condemns all others to the task of making clear what he says." George Dennis O'Brien in *Hegel on Reason and History* has taken up the challenge and in a carefully documented and well-argued volume he seeks to explain Hegel's conception of the historical process, its pattern and aim. Although O'Brien is somewhat too concerned to make Hegel intelligible primarily to philosophers of the dominant logico-analytic standpoint, his effort is novel as an attempt to sing Hegel's song, as it were, in a strange land. Such an enterprise, how-

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ever, is not without its irony because it seems clear that if those at the opposite end of the philosophical spectrum from Hegel were to enter sympathetically into his thought they would be led to abandon their positions! On the other hand, O'Brien's interpretation of Hegel should be considered on its own account regardless of the intended audience. It is enough that he aims to bring Hegel's ideas within the compass of the contemporary climate of opinion and much can be learned from the comparisons.

Despite the textual difficulties surrounding *Reason in History*, the book serves as an excellent point of departure. The work is short and has been widely read, and one can derive from it Hegel's basic philosophical vision. O'Brien begins, rightly I believe, by questioning the validity of the commonly accepted distinction between "speculative" and "critical" philosophy of history. The speculative, as the term suggests, is supposed to involve large-scale and undisciplined prophecies about the entire course of human events, whereas the critical approach is to concentrate on the record of events, historiography and the work of the historian as someone who explains what has happened and why. Such a neat distinction, however, will do no justice to Hegel. His theory is based on the idea that there is an inner connection between the events regarded as historical and their transformation into representative thought on the three levels of original, reflective and philosophical history which he recognized.

As O'Brien points out, history for Hegel does not include everything that ever happened but is rather a special class of events determined by the working of the historical consciousness itself, so that what Hegel called philosophical history is a history of historical consciousness understood from the standpoint of Reason. Thus Hegel's philosophical treatment of history is not to be set in contrast to a supposedly "critical" approach as represented by the essentially non-historical enterprise of explaining events in terms of causal laws after the pattern of physics. Hegel has a special place within his category of reflective history for "critical" history which deals with historiography and "higher criticism," but this form of history certainly does not represent an alternative approach to the task of interpreting history philosophically.

O'Brien has an illuminating conception of the dialectical advance represented by Hegel's three kinds of history which is on its soundest ground in the transition between what Hegel called "fragmentary" history—the history of art, religion or law—and the properly philosophical type. The central idea is that in fragmentary history a *universal* viewpoint is required since one is dealing with a people as a whole, but unless one goes on to the philosophical vantage point where all histories are seen as the expression of the one universal Spirit which guides the course of world events, the art or religion of a people will be seen as no more than an accidental characteristic.

In his efforts to explain what Hegel meant by Reason both as subjective in human consciousness and as objective in the structures of human society and history, O'Brien is most successful. He has a firm grasp on Hegel's claim that history has ultimately to do with what is *individual* and therefore that the Reason which is in nature cannot be the proper model for understanding history because nature is repetitive while history is creative and presents ever new situations. The point is made secure by the excellent example of Condorcet drawn from his *Sketch for the Progress of the Human Mind.* Condorcet held that history inevitably progresses in the direction of enlightenment, freedom and the reign of reason; but, as O'Brien points out, the teleology invoked is purely *natural* because based on the conception of the natural man who is all universal, whereas Hegel sought for an *historical* teleology which can be no simple affair of abstract reason precisely because it must embrace evil and all the irrationalities of society. Whatever view

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one takes of Hegel's theory of history, it was an historical theory; he refused to interpret history on non-historical grounds.

Since Hegel's theory of the individual is a three-fold affair based on the model of self-consciousness, it must include the abstract universal or kind, its particularization under specific conditions, and the togetherness of the two in the individual which is a unified and self-determining reality. O'Brien nicely shows how many modern empiricists fail to appreciate Hegel's analysis because they think exclusively in two-fold structures involving universals (logic) and particulars (sense perception) and thus fail to reach the individual. And one can only applaud when the author insists that the real *a priorists* in the domain of history are those who omit the individuality of events in order to explain them "empirically" as instances of universal laws.

There is far more in this illuminating book than can be treated here. Of the greatest importance is the message contained in the summary of Hegel's belief about the goal of history as the freedom of all men. Hegel's emphasis on the *realization* of freedom means that freedom can become actual only in and through *institutions* and not merely *constitutions*. The tendency of the Western democracies has too often been to suppose that if freedoms are guaranteed by constitutional provisions, the institutions through which alone freedom becomes more than a word will somehow produce themselves. Hegel would tell us that this is not so.

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Littell traces the origin of the "Displacement Myth"—the notion that the meaning of the Jews ended with the coming of Christ—in the post-Testament literature of the Fathers, and postulates it as a persistent and convenient heresy that set the theological stage for the Holocaust. But the Jews did not go away. By their continued existence as a people, the Jews reaffirmed the reality of God; by their stubborn insistence on their identity as the Chosen People they effected an irritating counterculture and an embarrassing reminder to Christians that what they were called to do was give witness to God.

"To have faith is to remember, to recapitulate, to reenact, primordial events." Since at least the Enlightenment, Western Christianity has progressively succumbed to an intellectual style that crowds out mystery, ritual, oral tradition, and the historical, non-"rational" data of faith. In the process it has become increasingly less capable of understanding the reality of the Jewish experience in history and thus, by necessary implication, incapable of understanding the meaning of Christianity.

Only the Jews remained as a real presence. When the time came, they required the Final Solution because they were the Final Witness. Christianity stood by, morally disarmed and, in the final irony, too weak even to realize that its own God was at the stake.

But the Jews survived. If there is an optimistic note in *The Crucifixion of the Jews*, it is that the Jewish Resurrection will force Christianity to come to terms with the full meaning of the Jewish presence in history, and thereby come to terms with the full meaning and mission of Christianity.

The arguments are, of course, richer and more complex. Littell's style is intense, overwhelming the reader with barely-controlled rage, surrounding him with a repetitious rhetoric that often makes more sense on the intuitive than on the merely logical plane. One is never sure at a given moment whether to be angry with Littell, or dismayed, or assenting. It is a book not easy to put down; and, once having put down, not easy to pick up again.

But when a man of deep Christian faith and impeccable credentials as scholar and pastor asks whether Christianity is not obsolete, one listens.

CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 163)

swift reprimand, but the daily, grueling outrage, scandal and indifference of their pastors go untouched.

They—the people—really don't care about the high level comings and goings of popes and synods. For them Christ is localized at their parish level. They and their children receive their first indelible impressions of the Church there. And if "there" is less than wholesome, less than community, they have no recourse, no way to air their

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griefs nor speak to their bishop as a child does to his father.

At the last Bishops' meeting (which some wag said gave final agreement and permission for confession in the hand) only one bishop stood up with a kind of footnote reference to the parish. But the parish is where it's at, where the people are, and far from being the footnote, it should be the whole text. But how would we expect most bishops, many of whom have never been in a parish for any length of time, to know that? How could we expect a Confirmation-visiting prelate to communicate with real people at their level of experience and existence? How can we ever expect dialogue between the ordinary Catholic and a bishop separated in distance, remote in place, surrounded by aspiring clerics, protected by ecclesiastical jargon, imprisoned by administration and paperwork and removed from the realities of daily living? The people are getting tired of all this. They do want a voice in deciding "the fortune and future of the Church." And if no one is listening, they are becoming more determined than ever before to go their own way. REV. WILLIAM J. BAUSCH

Birmingham, Mich.

To the Editors: For quite some time, *Commonweal* has shown an alarming trendiness in its editorial thinking. The magazine's incredible approval of Nelson Rockefeller as Vice-President—and its subsequent clumsy retraction of that position, is but one recent embarrassing example of this unfortunate attempt to be "with it."

Again, in the Jan. 2nd issue, *Commonweal*'s editors claim that "the anti-abortion amendment is a right-wing issue," and that the Catholic bishops are about to become tools "of conservative so-called 'pro-life' (and perhaps anti-busing, anti-'welfare-chiselers,' pro-arms race, pro-CIA) candidates in the 1976 elections." Besides parroting the crudest epithets and fantasies of radical pro-abortion extremists, such a statement is a lie. The pro-life movement is in no way connected with anti-busing, pro-arms race, etc. sentiments, and it is well-known (apparently by almost everyone but *Commonweal*'s editors) that right to life support comes from a highly diversified population mixture—ideologically, socially, and politically; while abortion support on the other hand, mainly originates from an overwhelmingly white, middle- and upper-class, upper-income elite.

Equally irresponsible is *Commonweal*'s contention that the seeking of an "anti-abortion" amendment to the Constitution is a right-wing issue. On the contrary, the only national constitution which contains a specific right-to-life provision is that of West Germany, written after the collapse of the Third Reich as a legal safeguard against further right-wing excesses. On February 25, 1975, the West German Federal Constitutional Court handed down a 6-2 decision on the government's continuing duty to protect unborn human life. Included in the ruling were these incisive words:

> ". . . the [West German] Constitution protects life being developed in the mother's womb as an independent legal entity. The express inclusion of the right to life in the Constitution . . . is to be explained primarily as a reaction to 'the destruction of life that is not worthy of living,' to the 'final solution' and to 'liquidations' carried out by the National Socialist [Nazi] regime as government measures . . . The right to life is attributed to everyone who 'lives'; no distinction can be made between stages of developing life or between unborn and born life . . . Where human life exists it possesses human dignity. It is not determinative whether the bearer . . . is conscious of it and knows how to preserve it himself . . . The protection of human existence from excesses by the state would be incomplete if it did not also embrace the preliminary stage of 'finished life,' unborn life . . . Human life . . . represents a maximum value within the constitutional order; it is the vital basis of human dignity and the presupposition of all other fundamental rights."

Perhaps, as in its Rockefeller about-face, *Commonweal* will repudiate its attack on supporters of the right to life and a human life amendment, and come to realize which side in the abortion debate *really* represents the reactionary right-wing position. Establishment propaganda notwithstanding. Or will the editors continue to ignore the lessons of history and side with the

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forces of death and repeat the rationalizations of the power structure?

PATRICIA NIXON

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: I would like to clarify three points in the editorial "The Crisis" [Jan. 2]. First, there was no "study commissioned by the FDLC" [Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions], in the sense one usually uses for a social study. I was commissioned by the FDLC to write a report and deliver an address to their annual meeting using the data collected from the NORC replication of the 1963 Survey of American Catholics. The purpose of that report was to document the changing attitudes toward the liturgy. The full report should be available soon from the Liturgical Press at St. John's in Collegeville, Minnesota.

Then "another recent NORC survey" is the only survey we have done in this area, and is the source of both the FDLC data and the general data on the state of American Catholicism. The findings from this ten-year replication of the attitudes of American Catholics will soon be published in *Catholic Schools in a Declining Church* by Andrew Greeley, William McCready and Kathleen McCourt. (Available from Sheed & Ward/Universal Press, Inc., Mission, Kansas.)

Thirdly, the only "church money" that has ever gone into either the 1963 study or the 1974 study came from the FDLC. They are, as far as I know, the only church organization to have the courage to face these data and help support their analysis. They should be complimented for their farsightedness in sponsoring the report on changing attitudes toward the liturgy.

WILLIAM C. MCCREADY
Senior Study Director
National Opinion Research Center

Saxton's River, Vt.

To the Editors: Editorial lament for what was and what was not with our country's Catholic church in the 1975 Holy Year [Jan. 2] is as welcome as it is apropos. If written in heartache and anger, so was it read. If we are in the Slough of Despond, we cannot pull through without knowing and feeling what binds us.

The bishops' slippery try to launch a "non-denominational" drive for an anti-abortion amendment, which, if successful might have very little to do with creating a pro-life society, even pro-fetal life, is clearly looked at in yours and other commentaries. Another sadness of hierarchial action in '75 was the order by NCCB's executive committee to withhold distribution of the Abbey Press liturgy of the hours, "The Book of Prayer." What in God's name are the bishops afraid of, that they resort to this updated form of book burning? That the Abbey translation might be better than the official version? That too many people, including lay persons, might read it?

Compounding the Holy Year preoccupations, it was in 1975 that the regional meetings of bishops with clerical, religious and lay delegates of their regions, preceding the annual bishops'

Moral Education

ALTHOUGH MAN cannot live well without worship, the purpose of the religiously-oriented university is not to get its students into church. It is to form the values that will enable the citizen to function as a just man in a far-from-just society. This means that if students have dozed off, the educators must wake them up—challenge them again, through *academic* controversy, to face the moral and religious dimensions of the new social issues that will soon make demands on us all. For moral values are formed in response to demands—when one must choose between involvement and retreat, and when silence in the face of evil mounts to a share in the guilt.

Morality today is less than ever a list of learnable thoughts. It is a quality of character that can grow out of the unique combination of teaching, life experience, and reflection that the religiously-oriented university exists to provide. It can provide them in three ways: by curriculum, prophetic leadership, and community.

—*Commonweal, March 28, 1975*

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meeting, were discarded after only two years' trial. Noble experiment perhaps. Despite limitations, from all reports these meetings did open a marvelous opportunity for bishops to learn about their pastorage and to make touch with struggling, articulate, believing, sometimes achieving, living people. Was the opportunity too overwhelming to recognize? Given the circumstances and the men, the flight of the bishops is understandable. They were not prepared and unfortunately could not move deeper into such a learning experience. The voluminous explosions in regional meetings of 1973 brought an a priori ruling for 1974 that regional delegates must be "advisory" only and that no resolutions could be taken nor acted upon at the meetings. When the 1974 meetings were no less voluble and no more narrow in scope, the regional meetings were canceled out. End of touch.

A word seems due about responsibilities of lay people in regard to your suggestions for sacramental celebrations, responsibilities often less than readily taken. Home masses and other gatherings have disappeared in some parishes after initial response, because too few lay people accepted involvement. The idea that lay parishioners have innate powers of ministry according to their talents, powers which the church needs for its future development, not just because of priest shortage, is too far out for many persons who learned their lessons well in an earlier tradition.

That the sacrament of "reconciliation," the newly introduced name for penance, need not be mere "cosmetic tinkering" has been shown in communal services of some parishes, in parish study groups, and in seated, private confession-by-request, less visible, in some ways more potent than the burdened waiting lines of old. Knocking down the confessionals (to follow the altar rails) might be the best way to forget the empty symbols. Priests do report that some adults simply do not believe they are shriven without the old impedimenta and that some parents insist on confession for their children before first Eucharist even when the pastor does not require it. But there must be better ways of providing anonymity when needed than the perch in stuffy cupboards, so uncomfortable for confessor and penitent.

A good deal is going on in the living church, beyond the confines of officialdom. If not enough, it is still reason for encouragement. We may belong to a generation in which unofficial realities are more important than official ones in many aspects of religious and secular operation. Though statistics show that fewer people attend mass regularly, it seems obvious that those who do so receive the Eucharist more frequently and in greater numbers than was customary a few years ago. Ecumenical worship including the Eucharist is freely given and taken by members of different churches, to a degree way beyond the protocols of official statements. This is evident in individual churches and religious centers throughout the country and might be the biggest breaking down of barriers between Christians since Vatican II.

There are also good, scripturally based, contemporary homilies spoken and lively, devout liturgical celebrations, clergy and laity in full participation, albeit too rare, so far.

In 1975 as in earlier bitter years, the hierarchy has not been without lonely, prophetic voices on social, spiritual and moral issues. We rejoice for Memphis, Nashville, Pueblo and others, and for auxiliary bishops whose voices at the time seemed altogether alone.

What else of hope? Syndicated religious writer David Anderson commented in early January on the hardly noticed but "almost unanimous call" by NCCB for reform of our nation's economic life, reform based on a policy of full employment. The bishops said, according to Anderson, that economic policy should not be left to market forces, and that, quoting the bishops' statement, "Full employment is the foundation of a just economic policy; it should not be sacrificed for other political and economic goals."

In another release, Anderson said: "Perhaps the most important but least dramatic 'story' (of 1975) in the world was the joint Christian-Jewish response to the ongoing world hunger crisis. Its importance lies in the fact that it engaged not just theologians and church bureaucrats but the laity—across what has been the increasingly rigid lines of 'evangelicals' and 'social activists.'"

Deo gratias. M. MURPHY

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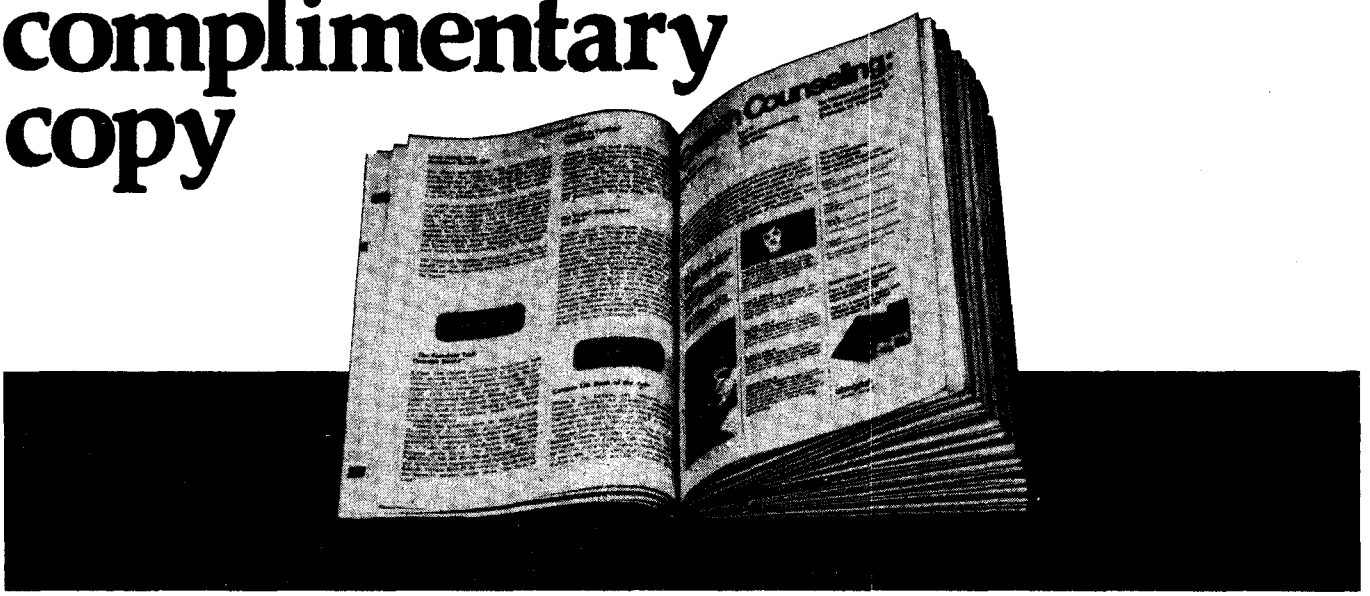

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